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THE WORKS

OF

MRS. AMELIA OPIE;

COMPLETE

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MRS. OPIE'S WORKS.

TALES OF REAL LIFE.

LADY ANNE AND LADY JANE.

"WELL, Harry," said Mr. Percy to his son, "which of my fair and noble wards am I to call daughter? You have been seemingly a long time suspended like Mahomet's tomb between two magnets."

"Alas for Mahomet's tomb, my dear father, if it be not more equally balanced than my affections."

"Then what think you of another simile—a child that is undecided whether to choose a peach or a nectarine?"

"No—that will not do, because the child has probably his choice of either, and I have not mine of the ladies in question."

"But I think you *may* have. Lady Anne Mortimer is a grand lovely creature!—what bright dark eyes she has!"

"Yes,—and what fascinating eyes, colour unknown, has Lady Jane Langley! I am sure I know not whether they be grey, blue, or hazel,—but by turns I believe they are all three,—and like a changeable silk, they are beautiful to the sight without one's being able to tell what is the predominant hue."

"Eyes like changeable silk, Harry!—Humph! I hope you do not extend the simile to her Ladyship's temper?"

"To her humour I do, and like her the better for it—

'From grave to gay, from lively to severe.'"

"That may be a recommendation to a mistress, Harry, but surely not to a wife. Bright-coloured silks, to borrow your metaphor in part, are not good for every-day wear; one of a more sober and *even* colour would do better. Lady Anne is the woman for a wife; she is not so dazzling as her cousin, but I think her more estimable—nay, she has more beauty also, for she has certainly better features."

"Better features, sir! So she has, I dare say, according to measurement; but there is one thing which Lady Jane has, which her cousin wants, and without which a beauty is almost plain, and with which a plain woman is almost beautiful—and that is *charm*, or, as the French call it, *agrément*.—It is what women feel in *our* sex, but cannot understand in their *own*; and when they see us admire a woman in whom they can discover no personal attraction, they begin measuring her nose and her mouth, and criticising the colour of her eyes, and hair, and complexion, till they end with 'In short, *I* call her plain and think it madness in men to admire her.' And to this gift, called 'charm,' and which I believe to have been Psyche's celebrated box of beauty, Lady Jane adds handsome, if not regular, features, and a form, a complexion——"

"By no means as fine as Lady Anne's."

"Why, perhaps not; for sometimes she's pale, and sometimes red; and Lady Anne's colour is permanent and unvarying."

"Unvarying, Harry! when her bloom is every moment deepened by the blush of feeling and modesty—while her tall figure and majestic carriage inspire respect as well as admiration."

"There again, sir—it is that very height, that very majesty, that I do not admire.—Not but that Lady Jane *can* be majestic too—but she had rather *please* than *awe*; rather *attract* than *repel*."

"Lady Jane majestic! By the side of Lady Anne she is rather short than otherwise."

"Short by the side of Lady Anne! to be sure she is—an acacia by the side of a Lombardy poplar! Lady Anne is

'Tall and as straight as a poplar tree,
And her cheeks are as red as a rose.'

but she wants *grace*,—and so does a poplar. There's Lady Jane throwing her lovely person into a thousand graceful attitudes like a bending woodbine, while her cousin sits in one posture like a cedar of Lebanon. Lady Jane is a beautiful running accompaniment, while Lady Anne is four minims in a bar. Besides, Lady Anne often speaks disagreeable truths, and Lady Jane none but agreeable ones."

"In short, my dear son, you are in love with Lady Jane, and to a man in love there is only one beautiful woman in the world."

"There you wrong me, sir,—I think Lady Anne very handsome, and I adore her virtues; and if she would but condescend to be *agreeable*, she would be irresistible."

"Well, well, I see all hope for her is over, and I am sorry for it;—for I fear that you like Lady Jane, and Lady Anne likes you."

"I hope not. But, sir, don't you think Lady Jane loves me a *little?*"

"I can't tell—for that '*charm*,' as you call it, throws such a bright halo round her, that I have as yet been unable to see her clearly enough to discern what her real feelings are. However, as my first wish is to see you happy, and as you can only be so with the woman of your heart, I will watch Lady Jane. I should have preferred Lady Anne. Besides, she has a great fortune, and her cousin comparatively a small one. But you have wealth enough, and more than enough with your late uncle's in possession, and mine in prospect; therefore you can please yourself without violating the dictates of worldly prudence; and I hope I shall live at least to see you married."

"I hope you will live," said Harry Percy, affectionately, "to see me and my children married, dear sir." Then seeing Lady Jane and Lady Anne in the garden, he eagerly ran to meet them.

It would indeed have been more for Harry Percy's interest to marry Lady Anne, as, not from vice but thoughtlessness, he had, though but just five-and-twenty, been forced to mortgage his only unentailed estate so considerably, that, as he had no ready money, a large sum with a wife could alone set him free; and as he knew that his father had no money to spare, he had carefully concealed from him an embarrassment which he well knew it would distress him not to be able to remove.

Lady Jane was the daughter of the Earl of M——, and Lady Anne of the Marquis of D——, and both were left by their fathers to the guardianship of Mr. Percy. As Mrs. Percy was living when these noblemen died, her husband's wards came to reside with her; and till he went abroad with a tutor at the age of eighteen, Percy had many opportunities of being with the young and beautiful cousins, of whom one was four, the other three years younger than himself.

At one-and-twenty he returned, and found Lady Jane, who, with her cousin, had been presented at court, a reigning belle in the fashionable world, and more full of fascination than ever; but though courted by all who beheld her, her eyes seemed, he thought, to look as tenderly as ever on *him*. Not so Lady Anne's; her eyes never sought his; on the contrary, they seemed to avoid them; and when he returned, after a long and severe illness, during which his life was despaired of, the one wounded his self-love, while the other soothed it. Lady Anne, when she saw him, was so struck with the change in his appearance that she could not at first speak; and when she did, it was to say in a faltering voice, and with eyes filled with tears—"Oh! Harry, how *ill* you look! I declare I should scarcely have known you! and you look so old!"

"Don't mind what that raven says, Harry," exclaimed Lady Jane, "she always sees the worst side of every thing; and I assure you *I* think, though you look as if you had been *unwell*, you never looked handsomer nor younger in your life."

Harry held a hand of each at this moment; and it is certain that he pressed Lady Jane's very tenderly, while he held Lady Anne's so coldly that she withdrew it.—From that moment Lady Jane stood on a vantage ground with Harry Percy which she never lost; for he thought the remark of Lady Jane kind, that of the other cruel; and though deeply impressed before he went abroad in favour of Lady Anne, he saw not, he heeded not, he understood not the faltering voice, the involuntary tears that accompanied her remark,—a remark impelled by real tenderness thrown by the anxieties of tenderness completely off its guard. Nor did he observe that, though her words were flattering, Lady Jane's feelings were cold. He therefore banished Lady Anne from his best affections, and received Lady Jane to them,—like many others, rejecting the substance for the shadow.

Lady Anne soon saw, and secretly deplored, the superiority of Lady Jane's influence over Percy to her own; for she thought *she* loved him better than her cousin, and for his *own* sake she wished that he had preferred her. But hers was no common mind, no common character. She thought that passions were given us for our slaves, not our tyrants; and the love which was not likely to be returned, she felt it her duty first to conceal, and ultimately to *subdue*, or at least to keep within proper bounds. But her trials were severe; and while she witnessed the progress of Percy's attachment to Lady Jane, she sighed to think how happy such evidences of love would have made her; and she sighed the more, because she felt assured that this devoted love was thrown away on one who was too volatile to feel the value of it. No wonder, therefore, that the usually *brusque* and severe manner of Lady Anne should become still more so.

"The carriage has been at the door this hour, Jane, and Mrs. Corbet and I have been waiting twenty minutes for you," said Lady Anne one morning, "and yet you are not ready.—It is very strange that you can never be punctual."

"Nor you *patient*, Anne."

"What is the matter?" said Percy entering. "Lady Anne, you look disturbed."

"Oh! she has only been scolding me as usual."

"Scolding you?"

"You, I suppose, think no one can be so hard-hearted as to scold such a divinity!" re-

plied Lady Anne, with a laugh that was *no* laugh.

"But what has Lady Jane done?"

"She is not ready, according to custom—and I am sure, Harry, I have heard you say that punctuality is a virtue."

"True;—but is not impatience a *vice?*"

"*There*, Anne! do you hear that?"

"I do," she replied, blushing deeply from pain at being reproved by the man she loved; "and I dare say, yes—I was—I am too impatient."

"Amiable candour!" cried Percy; "and I in return must own that I think Lady Jane's habit of not being punctual a most vile one, and——"

"What is that you are saying, young gentleman?" said Lady Jane, turning round from the glass, at which she was adjusting her head-dress, and looking at him with one of her most arch looks and dimpled smiles.

"I was saying the truth—that you are not perfect;" but looking fondly and even familiarly in her face as he spoke,

'If to thy share some female errors fall,
'Look in thy face and one forgets them all.'"

"Thank ye, young man—very civil, and very *new*. But Lady Anne has a face also, and a very handsome one it is."

"But not a face to be looked up at as yours was just now," said Lady Anne, almost pettishly.

"There, Harry! do you not see her meaning? She is such a prude, she thought your look and manner too free, and that no one dared to look at her so."

Lady Anne had *no* such meaning; but conscious that she spoke in *envy*, though not in *blame*, she remained silent; and Percy, quite lost in admiration of her rival, cared not to reply.

"How that gown becomes you!" said Harry, "and how pretty it is!"

"Do you think so?"

"Yes—or else it is you who become the gown, and impart to it your graces."

"Do you like it better than Lady Anne's?"

"I may be *wrong*—but I certainly do."

"A fair take in!" replied the mischievous Lady Jane laughing, "for they are both alike; only I know how to put on a gown, and she does not. Only see how her gown sits!—Why, my dear, one would think you were crooked."

"I dressed myself," she replied.

"And why, pray?"

"Because my maid was not quite well."

"But you could have had mine."

"Am I never to learn to wait on myself, and be an independent rational being?"

"There! Now Anne is in her heroics and moral sublimities, Harry, I must interrupt her; therefore pray go and call up the carriage."

"So Anne! you thought Harry's look too free, did you?"

"No such thing, Jane," she answered, her ingenuous mind disdaining the least approach to falsehood—"I meant very differently—I meant,—" and here her voice faltered—"I meant that my face had not the *charms* of yours, and therefore was not likely to be looked at *so, so* fondly."

"Well said, modest, humble Lady Anne! But I must tell Harry,—may I?"

"If you please; for the disingenuousness of being silent when you accused me before, is on my mind."

"What a delicate conscience is thine!" said Lady Jane laughing.

"O Percy!" she exclaimed as he returned and hung over her delighted, while he handed her down stairs, "I have Anne's confessions to make." And Lady Anne stayed behind till she thought all was said. Then, with one of her most majestic looks, she gave him her hand when he returned to meet her. But if she meant the look to awe Percy into forbearing to compliment her on her modest idea of her own face, it was thrown away; for he felt that what Lady Anne said was *just*,—he *could* not have looked at *her* in that manner,—and he was too honest to say what he could not mean. Whether Lady Anne suspected this truth I know not; but she felt sad and uncomfortable, and was very glad Percy did not accompany them in their drive.

It is very certain that Lady Jane dearly loved Lady Anne, and when alone with her, every feeling but of affection towards her was at rest; but when with her in the presence of others, she had such a consciousness of Lady Anne's superiority, and such a restless dread lest others should perceive it too, that she could not be easy without playing upon her noble cousin, and pointing out the bad style of her dress, and her occasional roughness of reproofs and manner. There are two sorts of jealousy;—the one struts a heroine with a poisoned bowl and bloody dagger—the other is only armed with pins and needles, and is no heroine at all;—but she makes such a use of her weapons, that she does as much and more harm to domestic happiness, and the interests of society, than her more lofty and impassioned sister. This anti-heroic jealousy was felt by Lady Jane, and it impelled her to stick pins, that is, to inflict trifling wounds on Lady Anne, except when *alone*, and then affection was triumphant.

"My dearest Anne," said Lady Jane during their drive, "I am afraid I distressed you by my flippancy just now?"

"No—you only fretted me, and to that I am pretty well accustomed."

"How sorry I am! But I will learn to behave better—indeed I will—for I am sure I love you, Anne! tenderly love you!"

"It would be strange if you did not, Jane!

It would be strange if two orphans like us, left to the care of the same guardian, and nearly akin in blood, should not love each other. It would be unnatural, it would be base."

"Ay, indeed; and I should be wickedly ungrateful, Anne, if I did not love you—for you are so kind to me! How should I get out of the embarrassments my extravagance involves me in, but for you?"

"Nonsense!" replied Lady Anne. "I have so few wants myself, that I can supply yours—and I have a pleasure in doing so."

Here the coach stopped at a shop in Bond-street, and the door was instantly thronged with fashionable men. Away flew all the pensive, sentimental graces Lady Jane's countenance had worn as she gazed on the saddened one of Lady Anne, and she beamed on the beaux from the door of the carriage in all the brilliance of a reigning belle.

"I think I see Lady Anne in yon corner," said Lord Lorimer—"I hope her ladyship's well," bowing very respectfully, having only given Lady Jane a nod.

The latter felt the difference and was piqued. "No," she replied for her cousin, "Lady Anne is very unwell. Don't you see how she is muffled up?"

"I never was better in my life," said Lady Anne leaning forward, and speaking in her most abrupt manner; "and my being *muffled* up, as Lady Jane calls it, is an act of choice, not necessity."

"You hear her; you see she will not allow me to make an excuse for her old woman's dress.—Is she not, my lord, a beautiful blowsy?"

"Beautiful she always is," replied Lord Lorimer.

"Oh! I know why *you* think so;—it is in return for Lady Anne's saying you were—but I dare not repeat what she said."

"You overpower me, Lady Jane," said Lord Lorimer conceitedly.

"It is true,—is it not Lady Anne? Did you not highly extol Lord Lorimer?"—added Lady Jane, well knowing what her answer would be.

"I never speak against my conscience," replied Lady Anne roughly, "and therefore I *could* not do it."

"O fy, fy, Lady Anne! what have you said? But indeed, my lord, you need not look so angry; for women, you know, are always rude to those they like best."

"Yes, yes," said Lord Lorimer, "that is human nature."

"But it is not *mine*, my lord, I assure you," cried Lady Anne angrily. "Lady Jane, I choose to drive on, for I am tired of this nonsense." So saying, she desired the footman to give her order, and the coach proceeded.

"Dear Anne!" said Lady Jane, "I see I have offended again."

"Yes;—I am angry now—what could induce you to flatter that coxcomb Lord Lorimer at my expense?"

"I am sure I don't know; but I believe it was from compassion, lest he should fall in love with you,—for your haughtiness, Anne, is as powerful a preservative from the effects of your charms, as is the offensive smell of some beautiful but poisonous berries; their hue attracts, but their scent repels; therefore the thirsty traveller escapes."

"Am I so *very* rude, so *very* repellant, Jane?"

"Rather so, my dear; and but for my little hint to save the poor man's self-love, you would have made Lord Lorimer your foe for life."

"No great harm if I had. But how *can* you delight to talk such stuff to these fops, these loungers, these killers of time?"

"Oh! a very harmless amusement. I am only spreading a few weak nets for a few harmless birds, a few hopping sparrows, and they are so slender they can break them at any time."

"But suppose, in the meanwhile, a bird of real value should, angry at your levity, escape from your net that is more skilfully woven?"

"Oh! if you mean Harry Percy! believe me, Anne, his heart is too surely mine for almost any thing I can do to break the chain.—No, Anne, I fear no rival influence, not even yours." (Mrs. Corbet had just alighted to go into a shop, or Lady Jane would not have said this.)

"*Mine!*—It is unkind, Jane, to mock me thus," replied Lady Anne; "you may well scorn all fear of *me* as a rival."

"No such thing, Lady Anne! Of all women in the world, if you, as Percy says, would but deign to be *agreeable*, I should fear *you* with him, and every one."

"Does Percy say that of me?"

"Yes;—he thinks it is all you want to be irresistible."

"I wish I had known that sooner!" thought Lady Anne.

"Positively, my dear girl," continued Lady Jane, "you are like a man who has the 20,000*l.* prize in his bureau, and will not give himself the trouble of claiming it. Here's a throat, white and round as ever Phidias formed, and yet you conceal it as if it were hideous! Here is hair, jetty and glossy as a raven's plume, and you hide it under a bushel,—I mean a cap,—but it is a cap as big as a bushel! And here is a foot, a model for a statuary, of which you don't suffer even the tip of a toe to be visible! My dear Anne, if you were to condescend to shine forth in all your charms, I should hate you mortally."

"Nay this is mere trifling," replied Lady Anne; "why *should* I try to please? The only man, you know, as you have unhappily surprised my secret, whom I ever wished to

please, is lost to me for ever, and 'I can hope no more.'"

The deep desponding tone in which this was spoken aroused all the affectionate nature of Lady Jane, and she exclaimed—"Don't talk so, Anne, I can't bear it; and I would resign fifty Percys, rather than make you wretched."

"But there are *not* fifty Percys, Jane. Alas! there is only *one*."

"No, not in your foolish eyes;—but in mine there may be many; and really, though I love him more than a *little*, only say the word, my beloved Anne, and I will say NO, should he ask me to say YEA."

"But he *loves* you, Jane;—and I prize his happiness beyond my own;—therefore I *wish* him to marry you. But tell me, Jane! In order to reconcile myself to the disgrace of loving a man who never asked me to love him, don't you think before he went abroad *I* was his favourite, and that his attentions warranted my partiality?"

"Why,—yes, I *do* think so," replied Lady Jane, a conscious feeling making her blush deeply.

"Enough, I am satisfied," replied Lady Anne, and the coach stopped at a shop in St. James'-street. A beggar immediately came up, and asked charity of Lady Jane. "Do, dear Lady Anne," she cried, "lend me half-a-crown for this poor wretch."

"What! give alms in such a public street as this, Jane! It looks so pharisaical!"

"What signifies the look?—Now *do* oblige me; for, as usual, I have no money."

"Well,—there is what you desire;—but it is so beggarly, Lady Jane, never to have money in your pocket."

"No,—it is wise if you will give me yours,—and it is *fashionable*, as no one wears pockets."

"Nonsense!—You know that I mean it is wrong to have no money of your own about you. I wish, dear Jane, as your true friend, I wish that you would learn to pay your debts, and be just before you are generous."

"Nay, Anne, remember what the man says in the play, about Justice being a hobbling beldame, who can't overtake Generosity."

"Yes, Jane, I do remember;—and I regret that the very great man who wrote that *speech* should have put forth so pernicious a sentiment;—for the man who——"

"Hush; Hush! dear Anne," interrupted Lady Jane, "or rather dear Joseph; for, if you disapprove one brother, I hate the other; and you were going on so like him; 'for the man who——' How do you do? How do you do?" cried Lady Jane interrupting herself, and Mr. Percy came up to the coach-window.

"Joseph!" said Lady Jane, "here 's our guardian."

"What! what did you call her?" asked Mr. Percy.

"Why, sir, I am Charles, and her ladyship Joseph Surface, at your service. And you, guardian, why, *you* shall be..... But come into the carriage, there 's a good gentleman;" and he got in. "Yes, guardian,—yes—you shall be Sir Peter Teazle."

"With all my heart, ward; but where is my *Lady Teazle?*"

"Oh, sir!" she replied, affecting to hide her face and blush, "if you would but *see* her, and accept her, sir, she is here before you! I have long wished for this opportunity, sir, and let my *blushes* speak for me."

"But what will my *son* say?"

"Oh, sir, never mind what he says,—I prefer you;—and he can't help himself,—I think you, indeed I do, a great deal handsomer than he is."

"Handsomer, I may be; *but* I fear that I want what my son says you have so *exclusively*, Lady Jane, and that is *charm*;—therefore, I advise you to prefer Harry to me."

"Well, then, what say you to Lady Anne?"

"Alas! I fear that Lady Anne will have nothing to say to me. But this I will say, that were *I* a young man, I should have much to say *to her*."

"Oh, you cruel, mortifying, ungrateful guardian! So, then, I see you prefer Lady Anne to me!" and she hid her mortification in a pretended sob. "What are you thinking of, Lady Anne, while you are looking at me so intently?"

"I was thinking, Lady Jane, how airs and graces like yours would become me; how *I* should look playing tricks like these."

"Like an elephant dancing a bolero, my dear!"

"So I thought;—but how long, Jane, will it become you to dance these boleros? I feel that all this may be charming in youth; but youth is a small part of human existence;—and I was carrying my eye further, and beholding you a few years hence."

"And what do you see, Anne?" replied Lady Jane in a tone of alarm.

"Oh! I hope, Jane, that all this playful gaiety, harmless as summer lightning, will end in the mild lustre of a calm summer's evening."

"Thank you, *dear* candid Anne," replied Lady Jane.

"You think all this lightning will go off without any destructive storms, do you, Lady Anne?" said Mr. Percy.

"I *hope* so," hesitatingly replied Lady Anne. "Jane has a good head, and an excellent heart."

"A truce, sweet Anne, with your flattery; or you will turn my head, however good it may be."

The coach, at this moment, stopped at H——t's, at the corner of Sidney's alley, and Lady Jane got out. After a few minutes she returned with a very handsome shirt-pin in

her hand, and followed by the shopman with a large case of jewels. As soon as they had driven off, Lady Jane exclaimed,

"Oh! I have almost ruined myself—but they were so beautiful I could not resist! Only see!" So saying, she opened the cases and exhibited a fine set of pink topazes, with strings of large pearl intermixed, for necklace and bracelets—"and here, guardian," said Lady Jane, "here is a present for you!" (giving the pin to Mr. Percy.)

"I hope you have not been so foolish," replied he, gravely, "to squander much money on this unnecessary piece of expense?—Pray, what did it cost, if I may venture so rude a question?"

"I dare say Jane does not know herself," observed Lady Anne, unguardedly.

"How! then she cannot have paid for it!"

"Paid for it! no, to be sure," replied Lady Jane, carelessly, "I have a bill there."

"Then these fine things are not paid for, which you have just made your own!"

"Certainly not; for I did not expect when I came out to be tempted to such extravagance."

"And what will be the price of these baubles?"

"Oh! a few hundreds!"

"A few hundreds!" exclaimed Mr. Percy, changing colour.—"There, madam, take back your present; for I will not increase a debt so wantonly and needlessly incurred."

"You are not serious, sir?"

"Indeed I am."

"There, this is all *your* doing, Lady Anne," said Lady Jane, pettishly.

"If it was, Lady Anne foresaw not the consequences of what she said," replied Mr. Percy.

"I believe you think Lady Anne can't do wrong, sir," said Lady Jane, in a tone of pique.

"I wish I could think the same of your ladyship; for in my opinion, running in debt thus carelessly and unnecessarily, is wrong; and excuse me, Lady Jane, but what vexes me in my ward, I should think criminal, and it would make me *miserable* in my *son's wife*."

Here lady Anne felt faint, and let down the glass for air. Though we know a misfortune to be unavoidable, when it comes we are not able to meet it with firmness at first. It was evident from this speech that Mr. Percy knew his son's intentions were *fixed*, and that the offer would soon be made, and she shrunk from the certainty thus announced; nor could she contemplate without generous alarm, from her knowledge of Lady Jane's extravagance, the probable distress which such a union would entail on the father-in-law, if not on the husband. A perturbed silence succeeded to this conversation, and to Mr. Percy's positive refusal to retain the shirt-pin; and as soon as they all alighted at Mr. Percy's house in Grosvenor Square, they separated; and all, with the exception of Mrs. Corbet, in no happy frame of mind retired to dress.

Mr. Percy could not drive from his memory the observation made unguardedly by Lady Anne, because it was evidently the result of a previous knowledge of her cousin's habits and character;—nor could he forget the manner of Lady Jane when he interrogated her respecting the jewels; for, much as incurring the debt itself alarmed and vexed him, her manner alarmed him still more, as it showed that such transactions were habitual to her, and that she was at once free from her own reproaches for her extravagance, and callous to his implied censure of it. Besides, he himself had seen in Lady Jane a love of high play; he had also often heard her bet, till he had been at length provoked to tell her, that he considered betting in a woman to be both indelicate and unfeminine. But he knew he could never make his son, as he was now seriously in love, behold Lady Jane with his eyes; he therefore resolved to endeavour to think Lady Jane's faults would, as Lady Anne said, be rectified by her good heart and excellent understanding.—Lady Jane's thoughts, meanwhile, were as painfully busy as Mr. Percy's;—she could not but feel that if Mr. Percy was vexed at her incurring one debt, he would sternly disapprove the involvement of many, and she dreaded lest chance or inquiry should bring to his knowledge the amount of her pecuniary embarrassments; while Lady Anne also walked pensively backwards and forwards in her own apartment, thinking over what had recently passed; but uppermost in her mind was Percy's observation, that if she would condescend to be agreeable, she would be irresistible; and Lady Jane's flattering assurances, that if instead of veiling she would display her beauty, she, even she, should fear her for a rival.—"And *would* I, if I *could*, rival Jane in the heart of the man she loves?" said Lady Anne to herself.—"But *does* she love him? No,—not as he ought to be loved.—Still, perhaps she loves him as well as she can love,—and that is not enough to induce her to conquer her mischievous habits, which will, I foresee, alienate the father, and make the son wretched. Oh! I fear that the lightning will not go off without many a storm! and the promised union will not be a happy one." Here, unable to pursue the course of her own thoughts, she rang for her maid.—"And my dress, too, as well as manner, is wrong, I find.—At least I feel, I own it is unlike other people's," thought Lady Anne—"Well, and that's wrong. Singularity of appearance, I have said, speaking of others, is either a mark of offensive disregard to the opinion of other people, or of excessive conceit, or of incipient insanity—and yet it seems, I dress singularly myself! But I will improve in this respect. I will try to be admired. Suitors and wooers

I must have, as the daughter of the Marquis of D——, and a great heiress cannot fail of *them*—but Jane, happy Lady Jane, is loved *chiefly* for *herself* alone, and that I envy her."

Mrs. Corbet was indeed, as I before observed, the only one of the party who returned home as happy, and only as wise, as when she went out. This lady, the daughter of a baronet, had married what is called prudently and respectably, and had reached the age of fifty-eight with an unblemished reputation. Her qualities were negative qualities; and when she was left a widow with an independent though not a large income, Mr. Percy, then recently deprived of a wife whom he adored, and whom his wards both loved and respected, was very glad to take advantage of his relationship to Mrs. Corbet's husband to invite her to take up her abode at his house, and be the companion and chaperone of Lady Anne and Lady Jane; for Mr. Percy knew that, if Mrs. Corbet did them no good, she would do them no harm; and that he thought was sufficient, as he flattered himself that an excellent governess and the society of his admirable wife had already satisfactorily completed the education which the parents of his noble wards had begun.

And Mr. Percy could not have chosen a chaperone for the fair cousins who would have suited them better; for Mrs. Corbet was acquiescent in her temper, rarely gave a dissenting opinion, and was much fonder of sitting silent, lost in her own reveries, than in joining in any conversation whatever—And the saucy Lady Jane used to say, that in case of a want of more lights at one of their assemblies, she thought Mrs. Corbet with a candle stuck in her hand would make a good pendant to the statue of Silence holding a lamp in the back drawing-room, and be quite as mute and motionless. By a being of this description, therefore, the events of the morning must have passed unobserved—and she retired to dress, wholly unconscious that her companions carried with them, imprinted on their brow, the stamp of inward and painful perturbation.

"What cap and turban, my lady, do you wear to-day?" said Barnes, Lady Anne's woman.

Lady Anne paused, then with a smile replied, "Neither, Barnes;—you shall dress my hair without a cap to-day."

"Indeed, my lady!" cried Barnes, looking delighted, "and shall I dress it like Lady Jane's?"

"Yes, if you please, Barnes;" and for once, since she came into society, the fine shape of Lady Anne's head was seen, and her beautiful hair shone to the best advantage.

"Dear me! my lady! I am so glad!" exclaimed Barnes, surveying her own performance with rapture,—"I never saw your ladyship look so well before.—You *do* look something *like* now." And Lady Anne could not help laughing within herself at the contrast to *looking something like* now.

"So then," said she to herself, "it seems that before I looked like *nothing* at all!"

"And pray what gown, my lady, do you wear to-day?—There is a large party of gentlemen to dinner, I find."

"True.—By the by, I will not dine below to-day,—my head aches, and I will save myself for the evening, when Mr. Percy has an assembly. Therefore, Barnes, you may leave me, I will not finish dressing till it is time for the evening party to arrive." While Barnes, sorry that the dinner as well as evening party should not see her lady looking so beautiful, reluctantly retired.

Lady Anne's head did ache, because so did her heart, and she wished to repose the former and commune with the latter.—When dinner was announced, which usually waited for Lady Jane, her maid told her that Lady Anne was too unwell to dine below; and her good and affectionate feelings taking the alarm, Lady Jane ran to her cousin's room, and started and blushed when she saw Lady Anne *coiffé en cheveux*. So! you have taken my hint, I see," she exclaimed, "and as to your illness, I believe it to be all pretence,—for I never saw you look so well in my life."

"I am so much *given* to pretence, that I do not wonder you accuse me."

"No, no, Anne, you know I can't really suspect you of fibbing—but what ails you?"

"O Jane! I am sick with many cares, and I wish to keep quiet till evening, as my head aches."

"Then do let me stay with you, dearest Anne! perhaps I could soothe you?"

"Yes, Jane, as the sight of the gallows soothes the felon who is to be hanged on it."

"Nay, Anne, I know to what you allude."

"No, you do *not*," replied Lady Anne with quickness—"I am thinking of you and Percy, but not in the way you fancy." Here a servant came to say that dinner had waited some time for Lady Jane; and affectionately kissing Lady Anne, while the tears stood in her beautiful eyes, she bade her adieu, and in a few minutes more she was the delight of Mr. Percy's guests as usual, and the pride of his son.

By the time the ladies retired, Lady Anne had reasoned herself into calmer thoughts, and her headache being gone, Lady Jane found her reading. "Not *dressed* yet!" said Lady Jane; "It is time you were, dear Anne! for it is ten o'clock; and at eleven I dare say some of those who go to six parties in an evening will be here."

"Do you think I shall be an hour dressing, Jane?"

"Yes,—if you mean to be dressed up to your head—which is so elegant that the rest of your dress ought to be well studied to suit it."

"I thank you for your solicitude about my appearance," replied Lady Anne smiling; "and if you will go to the company, I will join you as soon as the important business of the toilet is over."

"What gown does your ladyship wear to-day?" asked Barnes, apprehensive lest the dress should not be as handsome as the head-dress.

"That white satin gown like Lady Jane's, which I have never worn."

"Indeed! my lady! Oh! I am so glad! I thought you would have never worn it at all!" and with eager joy Barnes brought the long-neglected gown.

Lady Anne had accustomed herself so much to wear dresses made high in the neck, that she could not at first bear to wear a dress lower than the throat,—till the thought of self-approving beauty perhaps reconciled her to her appearance. "But I never can endure this petticoat so short in front," said she to Barnes. "I declare it shows more than half the foot."

"Dear, my lady," cried Barnes, "and what then? Lady Jane shows hers; and I am sure it is not half as beautiful as your ladyship's!" And Lady Anne was not a little mortified to find that she was pleased with this observation.

"Alas!" said Lady Anne to herself, "I have at length learnt to find that flattery, even from an inferior, is pleasant! O poor human nature!"

At last, and before the hour was out, Lady Anne was ready, and the fine suite of rooms was full of company before she made her appearance. A pang of jealousy shot through Lady Jane's bosom when she beheld her; and if instead of the cold look which she still wore, and the unbending majesty of her mien and person, Lady Anne had borrowed her cousin's cestus awhile, Lady Jane would have lost much of her power to please, from conscious dread of so formidable a rival. But Lady Anne's expression, though placid, was pensive, and her manner, as usual, any thing but inviting.

"I am easy," thought Lady Jane, especially as Percy was by her side breathing in her ear words and accents to which she was giving her delighted attention. Luckily for Lady Anne's composure, she saw them not; but looking neither to the right nor to the left, she walked on through two rows of company towards the inner drawing-room. The Duke of L——, a fine-looking man of fifty, was there, talking to Mr. Percy, Lord Lorimer, and others; but when Lady Anne appeared in sight he suddenly broke off his discourse to ask her name.

"It is one of my wards," replied Mr. Percy.

"Oh! I suppose it is the lady then, who is, as report says, to be your daughter also?"

"No, indeed, your grace is wrong in your conjecture," replied Mr. Percy, with a sigh; "it is Lady Jane Langley, and not Lady Anne Mortimer, on whom my son has fixed his affections."

"Lady Jane must be a very extraordinary woman indeed to surpass that exquisite creature," said the duke.

"Yet she does surpass her, duke," observed Lord Lorimer.

"Indeed!" returned the duke, incredulously.

"Not in my opinion," cried Mr. Percy, hastily.

"Lady Anne Mortimer! Oh! the daughter of the late Marquis of D——! and like him, too. What a noble carriage! She looks her rank!"

"Yes,—haughty enough!" again observed Lord Lorimer.

"I like a proud woman, my lord," replied the duke with quickness.

"Then Lady Anne would just suit your grace; and I should be very proud to dance at your wedding," rejoined Lord Lorimer, bowing low as he spoke; "but I suppose there would be nothing but minuets danced at it;—for the duchess is much too stately for any thing else, and—" Here he was forced to break off, as Lady Anne was near enough to hear what he said; and bowing to her with the utmost respect, he hoped her ladyship had quite recovered her illness of the morning.

"I told you in the morning, my lord," said Lady Anne, very roughly, "that I was in perfect health, therefore I must wonder at such inquiries from you in the evening."

Lord Lorimer, nothing daunted, returned, "Why is Lady Anne Mortimer like a holly-tree?—Answer—Because, though beautiful and attractive to look at, you cannot approach her without being in danger from her prickles, *alias* sharpness."

"But the holly, my lord," said the duke, (bowing, as he spoke, to Lady Anne,) "is in its full perfection in winter only, and this lady seems in the perfection of her beauty in the very spring of life." He then desired Mr. Percy to present him. He did so, and for a while interrupted her intended reply to Lord Lorimer.

"My sharpness, as you call it, my Lord," said Lady Anne, turning to Lord Lorimer, "has so improved your wit, that were I to liken *you* to any thing in the vegetable world, it would be to a bed of chamomile, which is the better for being trodden upon."

At this moment, in all the radiance of her countenance, and with all the graces of her manner, Lady Jane, flushed with the bloom of happy love, joined the group.

"Who is that Hebe?" whispered the duke to Mr. Percy.

"My other ward,—Lady Jane Langley;" and he presented him to her immediately;—but before he could address her, Lord Lorimer put his hand to his cheek as if in pain.

"What is the matter?" asked Lady Jane.

"Oh! the old matter. Lady Anne has been giving me a blow. Would you believe it? she compared me to a whole bed of chamomile!"

"Poor dear! — but be consoled, my lord. Recollect what I told you to-day; — that I know in her heart she admires you greatly."

"O that I had at this moment a window in my heart!" cried Lady Anne, with indignation.

"Well, Anne, that's kind; for it would, I know, save Lord Lorimer's many an ache."

"O thou generous, soothing being!" cried he, "but for your flattering assurances, I could not support the misery of thinking myself abhorrent to Lady Anne."

"I must tell your grace," said Lady Jane, "that I call Lady Anne, Sorrow, and myself, Pity, in Mrs. Barbauld's charming allegory—Pity being forced to follow Sorrow through the world, to drop balm into the wounds which she has made."

"I should think," replied he, "that your ladyship would have enough to do to heal the wounds which you inflict yourself."

"Oh! but the wounds which you allude to, sir, are made by arrows which tickle while they wound. Those which Lady Anne uses are of a very different description,—and—." Here she was interrupted by Percy, who now drew near; and while she turned on him eyes filled with joy and tenderness, he took her hand, and led her up to his father, who retired with them into another apartment; where Percy full of delight in which Mr. Percy did not share, presented Lady Jane to him as his betrothed bride. Lord Lorimer meanwhile went to pay his court where it would be more thankfully received, and the duke took this opportunity of trying to engage Lady Anne in conversation.

"I had the honour," said he, "to know your ladyship's father."

"Indeed!" she replied with a look beaming with affection; "it *was* an honour to know him;" and the duke smiled at the bluntness of this speech, a speech so rarely addressed to a man of his rank, and one too so renowned for his talents. But he forgave it because of the filial tenderness which dictated it; and he delighted Lady Anne so much by the praises he bestowed on her father, that she invited him to sit by her on the sofa. She also said most cordially, when the duke reluctantly took leave as soon as he saw that every one else was going, "the manner in which your grace has spoken of my father, and the clear and just estimate which you formed of his worth, prove you to have been highly worthy of his acquaintance; and I doubt not, as yours were kindred minds, that he highly and properly valued *you*."

"But may I presume, as *his* friend, to pay my respects to his daughter?"

"Certainly, sir," she replied; and the duke, more than half in love, sighed, bowed, and departed. Some few of the company however remained for the purpose of playing cards, and one lady coming up to Lady Anne, who was talking to Mr. Percy, asked her to make up a rubber.

"No indeed," replied Lady Anne roughly, "I never play cards; I think it a disgraceful waste of time;" and the lady, looking displeased and foolish, bowed coldly, and went in search of a more obliging person.

"My dear Lady Anne," said Mr. Percy, "why did you make that woman your enemy?"

"And have I done so?"

"Undonbtedly; — you not only seemed proud of your own superior wisdom in not understanding cards, but you showed that you thought meanly of her for being a card-player. I own to you, your words and manner shocked me;—I felt it *pharisaical* (to use a phrase of your own.")

"Indeed, sir! Then I am sure I do not wonder that you were shocked."

"You know, Lady Anne, how highly I admire you; therefore I hope you will pardon this freedom; but indeed this *brusquerie*, as Percy calls it, is a fault, and, as he also says, it is your only fault."

"Does Mr. Percy say so, sir?"

"He does; and what he disapproves and I disapprove,—we who love and honour you—surely you will think ought to be well weighed before it is persisted in. As to card-playing, I deem your objections unfounded and unjust. It is the *few*, not the many, who have talents for conversation, and who are capable of relishing discourse on morals, politics, or the belles-lettres; and unless persons have strong, full, and generous minds, conversation in all societies infallibly falls into gossip and detraction, unless cards are introduced; and when in such parties, I have congratulated myself on being able to play, as it enabled me thereby to make an effort to save reputations, and at least call forth a degree, though a low degree, of mental exertion."

"But I will never associate with people who can't converse."

"Lady Anne, you flatter yourself; you must take human nature as you find it, and bear with the infirmities of other people; else, what is your benevolence but a name? However, since what I have as yet said has no effect, let me put *another* and *common* case to you. There are diseases which in their progress over the body, weaken even the strongest and most studious mind, and doom the old man or woman, however vigorous their intellect previously, to utter incapacity of relishing, or even attending to reading, writing, or conversation. In such instances, I have seen cards a very great resource, and the afflicted object become suddenly forgetful of his infirmities by the entrance of a friend who could make up a rubber.

Now suppose me in this state, and you and Lady Jane attending on me like affectionate children;—would you not envy Lady Jane her power of aiding me by making up my whist party, or engaging me at piquet? And would you not be induced to think that any power which may be necessary to minister to the comfort of an invalid, and soothe the irritable moments of a suffering friend, is a power which the proudest of human intellects need not scorn to acquire?"

"But, dear sir, is it not shocking to see a man or woman on the verge of the grave, interested in the fluctuations of a card-table?"

"If it be the only amusement which decaying faculties can enjoy, and if the mind by being employed can be kept in that cheerful quiet state which is necessary to the preservation of what remains of existence, I own to you I am not so rigid in my notions, as not to view with complacency the chamber of sickness cheered by a harmless rubber, and the demon of news and lies, the spirit of detraction frightened away by the four honours and the odd trick; for no one can be always praying, and I believe the Deity never receives more grateful incense than that of a cheerful spirit, and a mind willing to make the best of its situation."

"My dear sir," said Lady Anne affectionately, "I will learn to play at cards, lest I, if it ever be necessary, which God forbid! should be wanted to make up *your* rubber."

That night Lady Jane followed Lady Anne into her room, to tell her that Percy had declared himself, and she had accepted him; and Lady Anne was very glad when Lady Jane, too happy and too delicate to notice her emotion, retired, and left her to indulge her feelings alone. But when she rose the next day, though her night had been a sleepless one, Lady Anne's manner was calm, and her countenance composed, and she congratulated Percy without any visible effort.

A few days after the Duke of L———, who had seen her several times since the night of the assembly, made her proposals in form, and in person, but was refused, and as he saw her change of countenance when Percy suddenly entered the room, he was sure her heart was engaged, and therefore dropped his suit entirely.

Percy, the object of affection to these young and beautiful heiresses, was at this time five-and-twenty; and if personal charms in a man could justify their admiration, it was indeed completely justified. But both the noble cousins required mind, virtues, and accomplishments in the being of their choice; and Percy was in heart, temper, and intellectual attainments, all that their ambition could desire in a lover or a husband.

At the early age of two-and-twenty, he became a rich and independent man by the death of an uncle, and was soon after returned to parliament for the borough which his uncle had represented. Nature had given him great talents, which education had perfected; and the eloquence which had early distinguished the school-boy, study and incessant practice had ripened into powers of oratory which did honour to the man. His maiden speech in parliament, on a question not of party but of general interest, was received with universal applause, and he was hailed by both sides of the house, as likely to become an ornament and a support to that party which he should ultimately embrace.

But it was not the intention of Percy to become the adherent of any set of men; for, like most young men who are conscious of great powers, he scorned to tread in any beaten path, he scorned to have his opinions influenced by any thing but his own conception of truth, and his utterance of them restrained by any bounds but those which the strictest conscience approved. In spite, therefore, of those great authorities which teach that parties are necessary in all free governments, and that the exertions of individual patriots must always be unavailing to serve or save their country; and full of that tenaciousness the result of youthful inexperience, and that ardent, sanguine temper which fancies that what is pure and perfect in theory may be easily reduced to practice,—Percy still adhered to his resolution of being what is called an independent member, though tempted by the offer of places on one side, and the prospect of popularity on the other. Therefore, as he had not bound himself to think all that was said or done on one side of the house right, and all on the other side wrong, Percy occasionally lent the aid of his eloquence to the measures of ministers, or gathered laurels as a welcome volunteer in the ranks of opposition; while each description of politicians listened with admiring attention to his eloquence; and like all possessions which we covet and admire without being able to call them our own, they probably admired it the more, because it was out of their power to appropriate its services to themselves.

When love assumed its turn to reign over the susceptible heart of Harry Percy, instead of impeding, it only served to forward the career of the orator; for the dear ambition of shining in the eyes of the woman whom he adored, the hope of receiving her praise when the debates of the preceding evening greeted her eyes on the breakfast-table, inspired him to new flights of eloquence; and while cheered by both sides of the house, the lover's heart beat only with anticipation of the applauses that awaited him from the lips of Lady Jane, and he enjoyed "*the future in the instant.*" But though Lady Jane enjoyed her triumph over the heart of a man so distinguished; though her vanity was gratified by leading him captive whose splendid talents

could enchain the admiration of senates; still she was too full of her own conscious powers, too proud of her own ability to make captives, to enjoy as she might otherwise have done the exertions and the eloquence of Percy; and while at *her* heart, at *her* admiration, the shafts of his oratory were directed, it was the bosom of another that they reached; and it was LADY ANNE alone who felt what Percy wished that LADY JANE should feel.

Though Lady Anne had been of age two months, Lady Jane was only twenty. However, it was agreed that the lovers should not wait till the last year of her minority was expired, but that the nuptials should be solemnized as soon as the necessary preparations could be made. A few days after this had been finally determined upon, Lady Jane, evidently in very low spirits, entered Lady Anne's apartment.

"What is the matter, Jane?" asked the latter in a tone of alarm.

"I am ashamed to tell you," said Lady Jane, "though you alone are the person who can relieve my distress."

"If I can relieve your distress, look on it as already relieved," replied Lady Anne affectionately. "Yet *how you*, with *your* prospects, can have any sorrows, I cannot imagine," she added with a sigh.

"If *you* had my prospects, Anne, I know you would have none," replied Lady Jane; "for *you* would have no fears, no painful consciousness, no embarrassments;—and oh! how much more worthy are you of my happy prospects than I!"

"I begin now to understand the nature of your grief," answered Lady Anne rather coldly; "but I wish you would come to the point at once."

"I will;—Terror lest Mr. Percy should conceive a violent prejudice against me, and forbid his son, on peril of his renouncing him, to make me his wife, prevents my daring to acknowledge that I am in debt; and what I want you to do is, to lend me money sufficient to pay some heavy bills which my maid shall give you."

"Give you money, you mean, Jane; lending it is out of the question."

"Indeed it is not; I mean to pay you back every farthing."

"Yes,—no doubt you *mean* it,—but you will never be able. However, I do not even *wish* to be repaid;—to prevent your becoming a wife against the approbation of your husband's father, is a duty which I owe you, and.....But to what do your debts amount?"

"Oh! to a few hundreds."

"No more?—Then I can assist you without difficulty. But I thereby, I hope, purchase a right to conjure you, if you value your husband's peace and your own respectability, never, never to incur debts again!"

Softened, obliged, and every worthy feeling triumphant, what was there lady Jane did not promise at this moment? what was there she did not think herself capable of performing? And Lady Anne confiding, because she wished to confide, authorized Lady Jane to send her her bills, and promised to let them be discharged.

Two days after, as Mr. Percy, Harry Percy, and the cousins were going to take a morning's drive, they saw two respectable-looking people, with five children, waiting in the hall, whom the servants were vainly trying to keep back; and when Lady Jane appeared, the others having been waiting for her, the whole group precipitated themselves forward, and obstructed her on her passage, exclaiming, as they did so, "God bless you, my lady! God bless you!"

Lady Jane, visibly affected, and saying, "There, go, go, good people, you distress me," endeavoured to get past; but Percy, catching her hand, stopped her, and insisted on an explanation of the scene which they beheld.

"It is nothing—nothing," she replied.

"Ay—God bless her!" cried the mother, "your good folks never think themselves good, but I'll tell your honour all about it;" and Lady Jane, though not displeased at having her generosity known to those whose good opinion she was most ambitious of, attempted, but in vain, to keep her silent.

"You must know," said the poor woman, "that good young lady, while alone in her coach one morning, saw me crying bitterly, and looking so ill! and so she asked me what ailed me; and I told her as how my husband had been bound for a friend, and had lost his all, and was thrown into prison, leaving me to work for these five children, and another a-coming!"

"It is all true, your honour," said the man, bowing low, "and so the next——"

"Nay, John—let me tell the story my own way—and so that blessed angel asked me where I lived; and the next day what does she do, but comes to see me her own self, and then she asked me how much would free my husband, and I told her a hundred pound. And then if she did not send some man to pay it, and my poor John came home again!"

"A very good deed," said Mr. Percy, looking pleased at Lady Jane, while Harry Percy kissed her hand in silence, and Lady Anne said nothing.

"But that's not all, your honour; no,—for 'now,' says she, 'what would set you up in business again?' and, as true as I live, if she did not give us a hundred more! besides clothing us all, as you see; and then, when we begged to know her name, that we might remember it in our prayers, she said, 'pray for me as your friend; and the Reader of all hearts will be sufficiently informed;'—and it was only yesterday that we found out where

she lived, and then we all said, says we, we will go and show her our new clothes, and thank her, and bless her; for it is not right that such a good deed should not be known, for it is a fine example to be followed."

"It is indeed, and this is all true, your honour," said the poor man, "and I 'm a slop-seller, quite at your lordship's service, if you want any thing in my way."

"I honour your gratitude," said Mr. Percy, "and can assure you, for Lady Jane's sake, *I* too will be your friend."

"And *I*," said Harry, eagerly; "and so, I dare say, if you need it, will Lady Anne."

"Undoubtedly," answered Lady Anne; while Lady Jane, on her guardian and lover's tenderly commending her for that true charity that fled from thanks and notice, turned quickly round to Lady Anne, and said in a tone of pique, "Was *this* pharisaical, Anne?"

"No, certainly not," she replied; "but—" darting a very significant glance at her cousin. This glance was not lost on Mr. Percy; and *he* saw with pain, but Percy with indignation, that she had looked cold and unmoved while Lady Jane's benevolence was thus revealed; and though Percy attributed her manner and her silence to a feeling of envy, his more just and more discerning father suspected that Lady Anne had purer motives for her forbearance to praise an action which certainly appeared praiseworthy.

The truth was, that just before Lady Anne had got ready for the drive, Ellis, Lady Jane's woman, had put into her hand her lady's bills, and she beheld with painful surprise that they amounted to some thousands, instead of hundreds. It could not be supposed, therefore, that in the *generosity* not founded on *justice*, but probably at the *expense* of it, which the gift of two hundred pounds exhibited, Lady Anne, the truly generous, because the truly just and self-denying Lady Anne, could so far prostitute her sense of right, as to praise an action which her private knowledge rendered reprehensible in her eyes. Therefore, though she correctly interpreted the expression of Percy's countenance, and sighed to think that he imputed her coldness to unworthy motives, she still persisted in not joining the general praise, and felt relieved when the protégés of Lady Jane, having been consigned to the hospitality of the servants' hall, took leave with numberless blessings, allowing them to depart on their intended expedition. Percy was now the only happy being of the party. Mr. Percy was grave; for Lady Anne's manner had rendered him suspicious, especially as he read on Lady Jane's countenance a conscious and fearful expression, and an incessant watching of Lady Anne's, which bewildered and alarmed him—But Harry Percy, absorbed in the recollection of Lady Jane's unobtrusive benevolence, and in the contemplation of her charms, looked on himself as the happiest of men, in the idea of being soon united to so much beauty and virtue.

As they passed H——t's shop, Lady Jane blushed deeply, and her confusion was augmented by Mr. Percy's telling his son the anecdote of the shirt-pin, and his reason for not keeping it. Percy looked distressed because Lady Jane did, and with a forced smile said he was shocked at his father's want of gallantry; and that if she had offered *him* such a a gift, much as he disapproved running in debt, yet his principles were not so rigid but that he should have accepted the present. "And indeed, dear sir," added he, "I have no fear that Lady Jane's debts will ever ruin me."

Lady Anne at this speech looked out of the window, but her look was unobserved by Mr. Percy, while Lady Jane turned on her unsuspecting lover eyes filled with tears of tenderness.

"I hope, Lady Jane," said Mr. Percy, "you will, before you change your situation, call in all your little bills;—little no doubt they *must* be, as my allowance to you has been too ample for you to have had any temptation to incur *large* ones.—Your noble cousin had not one debt, and I hope that you have not been slow to profit in some degree by so good an example."

"Lady Anne is my superior in every thing, sir," replied Lady Jane, bursting into tears occasioned by a variety of conflicting emotions.

"She is indeed a most superior being," said Mr. Percy with a sigh; while Lady Anne, confused and distressed, remained silent, and Percy whispered in Lady Jane's ear, that *he* at least did not think her so;—on which her April face soon brightened into smiles again.

"Have you ordered H——t's bill?" asked Mr. Percy, still harping on the old and to him suspicious subject;—and Lady Jane, her countenance again clouding as she spoke, assured him that she had; while he saw at this assurance an expression of anxious alarm overcloud the brow of Lady Anne. At length their drive ended, and Lady Anne found herself alone with Lady Jane.

"I see, Anne," said the latter, "that you were *shocked*, not gratified, at the scene of the morning."

"I *was*, Jane—for I had recently received and looked over your enormous bills—"

"Enormous!"

"Yes, to an amount which you, I dare say, *dream* not of; and *I* think such bills should have been paid before two hundred pounds were expended on persons who may, after all, not be the most deserving objects possible.—But even supposing that they are worthy, amongst your creditors are some perhaps as poor, who want the relief of being paid their just debts—for, would you believe it? your debts are to this amount!" giving her the sum total,—over which Lady Jane cast an eager

and hasty glance, and exclaiming "I could not have believed it!" hid her face on her arm, and burst into tears.—Well indeed might she be distressed; for she knew that she did not mean to disclose all her debts to Lady Anne, and that nearly as many more remained behind, to be discharged by herself at the first opportunity.

"Weep not, but look forward, Jane!" cried Lady Anne, "look forward to amendment, and hear what I have to say to you.—You know that besides my estates I am worth personal property to the amount of some thousands, part of which I once meant to have expended on new setting, altering and adding to my mother's jewels, to do honour to your nuptials."

Here her voice faltered—and while she paused Lady Jane eagerly cried, "Once *meant* to expend! and do you then no longer?"

"I cannot; for I must recall the order I have given the jeweller, in order to pay your debts."

"Oh no! I cannot bear it—it *must* not be—you must have the jewels, your rank requires it."

"But your necessities require the money still more; and I must not, will not, be seduced even by *you*, and to do *honour* to you, to act against my principles, and incur a debt I cannot possibly discharge within the year."

"And why not?"

"Because the other thousands are *disposed* of—I have two distant and poor relations whom I wish to render independent; the rest of the family have neglected them, therefore it is the more incumbent on me to do my duty by them; and as they are old and infirm, they cannot wait to a future opportunity."

I will not attempt to describe Lady Jane's feelings at finding that the removal of her own difficulties, the result of her extravagance, (for charity like her's might also be denominated extravagance,) was to be purchased by a privation to her noble-minded cousin! However the case was too urgent to admit of delay. Lady Anne's jewels were sent for home, and the money intended to be laid out on them, when she drew for it, was to be employed in discharging the bills of Lady Jane.

But suspicion once awakened is not easily laid asleep again, and Mr. Percy's suspicions were on the alert. The next morning he met Lady Jane's woman on the stairs looking over a long bill, and he could not resist his wish of knowing what it was, and what the amount. "Is that H——t's bill, which your lady told me she had sent for?"

"Yes, sir, it is his and another too," replied Ellis, concluding that Mr. Percy, as her lady's guardian, was to pay them.

"Give them to me."

She did so, and he saw with wonder and resentment that the two bills amounted to several hundred pounds. But suppressing his feelings and keeping the bills, he desired her to tell her lady that he had commissioned her to get in every out-standing bill immediately. Ellis obeyed him; and Lady Jane, seeing that all must be disclosed, was forced to have recourse to a glass of water to keep her from fainting. In this emergency what could she do? "At least," said she to herself, "I will make a virtue of necessity, and before disclosure is no longer avoidable I will confess all to Percy, and I trust that in my ingenuousness he will forget my fault." She did so; and Percy, though surprised and shocked, lover-like, overlooked her errors in her imagined greatness of mind in confessing them, and assured her she was dearer to him than ever.

Supported therefore by his approving and confiding tenderness, she was the better able to meet his father's awful frown when she was summoned to his presence, after he had received all the bills which he had sent Ellis round to call in, and which amounted to nearly two thousand pounds! On hearing the amount of the debt, Percy himself was as distressed though not as angry as his father; and he was the more grieved, because he had not wherewithal to discharge it.

"I have now to ask you, madam, if these are all your debts!" said Mr. Percy sternly. And Lady Jane, resuming at once all the original honesty and generosity of her nature, replied, "I will answer that question, sir, only in the presence of Lady Anne;" who was accordingly summoned to the conference.

"Now, sir," said Lady Jane, as soon as her cousin entered, and looking at Lady Anne with an expression of affectionate triumph, "now, sir, I will answer your question. I owe much more than the amount of the bills now in your hand. You must add to them the sum which my generous cousin had undertaken to discharge, though in order to do so she was forced to make a great personal sacrifice."

"It was *no* sacrifice, none at all, my generous, candid Jane," replied Lady Anne, gratified and affected at this unexpected virtue in Lady Jane; who, overcome by the effort, threw herself on her cousin's neck and sobbed aloud.

"O sir!" said Percy, seeing his father himself affected, "will you in a degree excuse a fault so honourably confessed and atoned for?"

"I honour, my son," he replied, "as much as *you* can do, a generous and candid avowal of a fault which otherwise could not have been known; still my resolve is irrevocable. I have no money to spare for unexpected demands, and you, I know, have none; nor can I, *will* I allow Lady Anne to pay the money she has promised; therefore, on pain of my eternal displeasure, I *command* you to give up all idea of marrying Lady Jane till the whole debt is paid; for *never*, with my consent, shall my *son* marry to run the risk of being involved and poor through life, by having a debt of this

magnitude to discharge. In a twelvemonth Lady Jane will be of age, and part of her fortune may then be sold to liquidate her debts. A twelvemonth too is necessary at least for her to try to break herself of her pernicious habits; and during that time she or *you* will have an opportunity of changing your minds, if you desire it, and breaking off a union from which *I* foresee no good will arise."

During this speech, Lady Jane, bathed in tears, reclined on Lady Anne's shoulders, and Percy in great agitation paced up and down the room. "Sir, sir," said he, "this is harsh, this is *cruel*, sir."

"May be so; but it is unalterable," replied his father.

"Dear sir! hear me, let *me* speak," cried Lady Anne, feeling deeply for both the lovers.

"No, most dear and most revered Lady Anne," said Mr. Percy, taking her hand, "I *cannot* hear you. Though no longer your guardian, it is my duty still to watch over your interests, and not to allow you to sacrifice yourself for others not worthy such a sacrifice."

"Don't say so, sir, don't say so," cried Lady Anne; "Jane is *not* unworthy, and I should grudge no sacrifice for her sake!" Percy instantly seized Lady Anne's hand, and kissed it with grateful emotion; while, turning very pale, she hid her face in her cousin's neck; and Mr. Percy, who saw her change of countenance, and understood her feelings, more mortified than ever at his son's blind preference, darted at him a look of indignation, and left the room.

"We must get this interdiction taken off," said Lady Anne, after a pause of much emotion on all sides.

"Do that, dear, generous Lady Anne, and I shall bless you for ever!" cried Percy.

"I will see what is to be done," she replied coldly, and left the lovers alone. But in vain did Lady Anne still request to be permitted to pay part of the debt; in vain did she entreat that the marriage might be allowed to take place,—Mr. Percy was inexorable, and repeated,

"My son may marry if he chooses, but it will be against my publicly avowed disapprobation of his *choice;*—and I am sure Percy will never expose the woman he loves to such an insult; besides, who knows but during a year's trial of their constancy something may happen to prevent the marriage for ever?—and if so, O! how I should rejoice!"

Lady Anne *feared* that *she* should rejoice too;—but too honourable to allow even a chance so flattering to her feelings to turn her aside from the duties of friendship, she still persisted in her endeavour to prevail on Mr. Percy to recall his mandate; but, "Never!" was his constant answer; "while Lady Jane remains in debt, she never, if I can help it, shall be the wife of my son."

Lady Anne, ever since Percy and her cousin became declared lovers, spent much of her time in her own apartment, from feelings and motives easy to be guessed at; and therefore she was not soon aware that something unpleasant had occurred between them. At length, however, she observed that Percy looked pale and wretched, and Lady Jane sullen; nor was she slow to demand of the latter a reason for what she saw.

"Oh! it is only," she replied, "that Harry is absurd and unjust."

"Only that!" answered Lady Anne, with an ironical air; "I think that only is a great deal, considering he was neither absurd nor unjust before."

"That is liberal in you, Anne, all things considered; but my *guardian* would tell you he was *both* when he preferred me to you."

"We will drop that subject, if you please," replied Lady Anne, coldly; "And now explain in what respect Percy, in *your* eyes, is absurd and unjust. Wretched I *see* he is."

"Ay, and he is absurd in *being* wretched; for the truth is, he is jealous. He cannot bear that I should flirt with that man worth a million, who is just come from India."

"Then why *do* you flirt with him?"

"But it is not true;—I *don't* flirt; only the poor gentleman says civil things to me, and I can't say uncivil ones to *him* in return, you know."

"Tell him you are an engaged woman."

"He knows *that*,—and I take care always to let him see I love Percy. But Percy's fear is, since he has known my propensity to spend money, that this agreeable Nabob, for agreeable he certainly is, should make me such offers as might tempt me to give him the preference; especially as, to be *candid*, my pride is not a little hurt at the style in which Mr. Percy has presumed to talk to me,—hinting as if he thought it was an honour to Lady Jane Langley to be the wife of his son, *Mr. Percy*."

"And so it *is*, Jane," interrupted Lady Anne. "It would be an honour to *any* woman, however high her rank, to be the choice of such a nobly-gifted creature as Harry Percy!"

"Mighty fine! I wonder whether your ladyship's father, the Marquis of D——, would have been of the same opinion!"

"*He would*, and so would your ladyship's father."

"But my ladyship's father's daughter sees differently;—not that she thinks she *confers* honour. O no,—far from it indeed; but she cannot think she receives it. And there is my buckram guardian setting up his large eyes and looking so grand! that for fear he should have put some of his proud notions into Percy's head, I *take care* to keep the honest lad's pride down by teasing him a little, and alarming him with the idea of losing me!"

"Jane, I have no patience with you."

"You never had any, Anne."

"And shall have still less, if you can be so base as to delight in tormenting a heart that loves you; a heart that . . . . ." Here, spite of herself, emotions, conscious emotions, choked her utterance.

"I tell you what, Anne," replied Lady Jane, "every one scolds me now, and I am almost weary of my life;—I see that I have alienated from me my guardian's good will, my lover's confidence, and my only friend's esteem;—and if my situation does not change soon at *home*, I cannot answer for not seeking something better abroad."

So saying, with an air of grief and despondence unusual to a countenance so animated as hers usually was, she ran out of the room, and left her affectionate cousin in a state of alarm and agitation.

In the evening, Lady Anne, on entering the drawing-room, found Percy alone,—and she no longer avoided, but sought a conversation with him;—nor was it long before, of his own accord, he revealed to her the anxiety of his mind. Lady Jane had been quite correct in her communications. She had contrived to make Percy jealous and miserable by the way in which she received the agreeable Nabob's attentions;—having told him also, when he expostulated with her, that his father's authority had dissolved their engagement for a year, and therefore inclination was now the only bond between them.

"I can only say, my dear friend," said Percy, "that if she goes on thus, neither my brain nor health can bear the constant wretchedness I endure; for I have discovered, Lady Anne, that of all pangs to which mortals are subject, there are none so agonizing and so destructive as the pangs of jealousy."

Lady Anne could have told him this long ago;—but she had gone through, had survived, and conquered them.

"Harry," she replied, "you do not suffer alone;—Lady Jane is very wretched too.—Your father's evident disapprobation of her, and your marriage with her, have awakened all the pride, the *proper* pride of her soul; and I must say, in Jane's defence, that it must be a very galling, a very disagreeable thing to any woman to become the wife of the son, when the father would, if he could, for ever forbid the union.

"True,—most true;—but what is to be done? for even *you* have failed to move my father's heart in our favour."

Lady Anne shook her head mournfully; and company coming in, the conference broke up.

At midnight, when the guests were departed, Lady Anne retired, but not to sleep.—She felt that, like Mr. Percy, she too had almost unconsciously looked forward with pleasure to the change which might take place in the course of a twelvemonth; but Mr. Percy's words had caused her to look into her own heart, and her generous nature revolted at what she saw there. To undress in order to obtain sleep was impossible; therefore she dismissed Barnes, saying she would, when inclined to go to bed, undress herself;—and then, till it was daylight, she paced up and down her apartment, struggling with her selfish feelings, and encouraging her generous ones, till her resolution was taken and her plans fixed.

"He shall be saved if I can save him; he shall be happy if *I* can make him so," she exclaimed; and then with a lightened heart she undressed and slept awhile.

When she was risen, she went for Ellis, Lady Jane's woman—and asked her, unknown to her lady, to let her once more see the bills which she had delivered to Mr. Percy. Lady Anne again cast up the sum total; and having, without being forced to deprive her poor relations of their little fortune, contrived a way of discharging them all, she went to her bankers; and with the assistance of Ellis, who, as she was tormented by the creditors, was delighted to have her lady's debts discharged, all Lady Jane owed was paid in three days' time; and Lady Anne therefore knew, that as the deed was done, Mr. Percy could no longer oppose it, nor could he have any longer a plea to defer the marriage of Percy and Lady Jane.

When Lady Anne had obtained all the receipts, she put them on a file; and going into Lady Jane's apartment, where she sat alone and musing over her miseries, she presented the file to her, and desired her to see what it held.—Lady Jane having surveyed it uttered a scream of surprise, but so mingled with delight that Lady Anne felt herself almost repaid; and while Lady Jane in an agony of gratitude,—gratitude composed of so many *mingled* feelings, that it amounted to pain,—hung on Lady Anne's neck, and called her her saviour and the preserver of Percy, Lady Anne's tears flowed as fast as hers did, but *words* she spoke *none*.

"Where, where is Percy?" cried Lady Jane, "I must seek him."

"Do so," said Lady Anne, turning pale.

"But first tell me how you got money to pay these vile debts without disappointing your cousins of their little wealth, as well as yourself of the jewels."

"By altering my plans for the next year and half at least. Instead of taking a house with Mrs. Tyrawley as my chaperone, and living up to my income and my rank, I shall take a small house, retaining Mrs. Corbet to reside with me; for, to be honest, the money I have paid for you is the greater part of my income for the ensuing year, which my bankers advanced on my paying them interest for the money."

"O Anne! your goodness overpowers me.

And for our sake you give up all that other women value!"

"No Jane, not so. In making those I love happy, I secure to myself what, in my eyes, is of more value than a splendid establishment. Nor should I thus point out to you the extent of what you will think privations to me, if I did not wish to teach you, that the generosity built on self-denial is the only true and valuable generosity; and to lead you to follow while you applaud my example."

To this well-meant hint Lady Jane replied only by a shake of the head and a deep sigh, and went in search of Percy, whom she found brooding over his imagined danger, and making his agonies worse by dwelling on them. But in the next moment he was lifted from the depth of despondence to the height of hope and happiness! Yet still his joy was damped by the consciousness of the sacrifice which Lady Anne had made, and he more bitterly deplored than ever his own early extravagance, which had made it impossible for him to raise the money necessary to remove the embarrassments of Lady Jane.

"Best of women!" cried Percy, when he heard what Lady Anne had done, "how can we ever repay her? Yes, dearest Jane! yes, we *can* repay her," added he tenderly; "payment *is* in our power.—Let her see us happy, and her generous nature will be amply repaid."

"And do you think we *shall not* be happy, Harry? Have your father's prejudices infected you?"

"How can you think so, Jane?" replied Percy blushing. "If they had, do you imagine I could thus rejoice in the prospect of being united to you? but let us talk of your cousin;—This voluntary kindness of hers in order to insure or expedite our union rejoices me also on her own account; for it convinces me she has not that regard for me which you and my father feared she had; for I am sure, from my own feelings, that no man or woman in love could endeavour to facilitate the union of the beloved object with another. I am sure I could not have done all in my power, Jane, to marry you to the *nabob*."

"Nor I, Harry, to marry you to Lady Anne, but—"

"But what?

"Oh, nothing," replied Lady Jane. "But," she was going to say, "though *we* are not, Anne *is* capable of such a sacrifice." Knowing, however, how enthusiastic an admirer Harry Percy was of acts of superior virtue, she could not bear, on second thoughts, to let him learn the whole extent of Lady Anne's superiority.

"Now, Jane," said he, "I must leave you, and go to the House, even without seeing Lady Anne to thank her for her goodness; and do you return, and tell her that she must put the finishing stroke to it by breaking what she has done to my father, and prevailing on him to put matters in train for our speedy union."

"I will," replied Lady Jane. Then saying to herself, "O poor Lady Anne!" she, almost reluctantly, returned to her cousin.

"I will go to him instantly," said Lady Anne in reply, well knowing that when efforts are to be made they ought not to be long reflected upon; and hearing Mr. Percy was in his library, she ventured to join him there. Surprise, disappointment, indignation, and regret, were Mr. Percy's first feelings, on hearing what Lady Anne had to communicate, mixed with admiration of her own generous self-command, since, more quick-sighted than his son to the state of Lady Anne's feelings, he knew and could appreciate the greatness of her conduct.

"But this is *robbery*, downright *robbery*, Lady Anne," he said at last, "for years must elapse before either Percy or I can ever repay you."

"And suppose I am never repaid," replied Lady Anne, "there will be no great harm—for, *indeed*, I can do without the money;" and afraid lest Mr. Percy should know that she had already made some sacrifices, and must make still greater, she changed the conversation, and earnestly preferred her petition that preparations for the marriage might take place without delay. Mr. Percy looked at her with feelings of affectionate esteem and admiration, but dared not express his admiration, lest she should suspect why he so much admired, and by that means discover that the secret of her heart was known to him.

"Lady Anne," replied he, "as it is your wish, your request, I will do all in my power to expedite this, in my eyes, ill-starred union; for you have acquired a right to be alone consulted, and I will do for your dear sake, what I positively assure you I would do to oblige no one else. But I tell you honestly I do not approve this marriage, and I never will say that I do." And Lady Anne thinking it politic to be contented with this ungracious assent, as opposition might have rendered it still more so, thanked him even warmly for his promise, and retired to impart the news to Lady Jane.—Though, in the first instance, Lady Anne's bounty was the result of pure, disinterested benevolence; still, upon a selfish principle of consideration for her own feelings, the conduct she pursued was the best possible in order to support her under the downfall of all her hopes; for sweet and consoling to her was the consciousness of her own heroism; and that feeling of hopeless love, which, if suffered to remain in quiet inactivity, would have preyed on her health, perhaps, and destroyed the energies of her mind, by being forced into action and exertion in the cause of the beloved object, served as a balm to the wounds it had inflicted, and enabled her even to witness with

composure the ceremony which gave the man of her affections to her envied rival.

"He is my gift," said she mentally; "but for me, she might never have called him hers; and *if* he is happy, *I* too shall have been the *means* of his *happiness*."

Still, Lady Anne, as she stood at the altar, was very glad of the assistance of the long white veil which she wore, to conceal the conscious fluctuations of her complexion. Nor did she raise her veil even to receive the parting kiss of the bride, who with her husband set off from the church-door on a tour of some weeks; but she contented herself with folding Lady Jane in an affectionate embrace, and receiving without returning the pressure of Percy's hand.

Lady Anne therefore succeeded in concealing her deep emotion from every eye save that of Mr. Percy, and to him her feelings were sacred and inviolable.

"Shall we take a drive into the country, Lady Anne?" said he, after handing her and Mrs. Corbet into the carriage.

"If you please, sir," replied Lady Anne, while through her veil the deadly paleness of her cheek was visible, which *certainly* no longer bore that full *unvarying colour* with which Percy had *reproached* it.

Mr. Percy, conscious how great the effort Lady Anne had made that morning, was alarmed at her excessive paleness, and the sort of desperate calmness and stillness of her manner;—still, delicacy forbade him to take notice of it, and Mrs. Corbet was one of those persons who look without seeing. At length, Mr. Percy, who was well acquainted with the human heart, fixed on a method likely to rouse Lady Anne from her distressing state of quietude, by calling forth the generous indignation of her nature, and he exclaimed—

"O Lady Anne, married as my son is, my only son, to a woman of high rank, tolerable fortune, and of great beauty and accomplishments, I must own that my heart, my father's heart, is not as well satisfied as it hoped to be on this occasion. I cannot, excuse me, dear Lady Anne, I cannot think your cousin calculated to make him happy."

"Sir, Mr. Percy!" returned Lady Anne vehemently, indignation bringing back the full tide of crimson to her face, "you surely, sir, forget we are not alone!"

"No, I do not," he replied, "and indeed it is next to being alone; for, if you look at Mrs. Corbet, you will see that she is attending to nothing but the pretty shops, and pretty men and women."

"Still, sir, I must beg you, if you must say any thing so painful to my feelings, and so unjust at the same time, I must beg, I say, that it may be kept for my private ear."

"Unjust! Well then, if our good friend has heard the accusation, pray let her hear the exculpation, and explain why I am unjust."

"With all my heart; I am convinced that Lady Jane is taught by past experience, and that the agony she has suffered on my account will be such as to make her very cautious how she errs in future. Besides, she has strong affections, she loves her husband, and she will love her children, and do her duty by them."

"No, Lady Anne, no; she may love her children, but you will be their mother."

"Oh, most gladly!" cried Lady Anne, but recollecting herself, she added rather angrily, "I must again remind you that this way of mentioning Lady Jane is unpleasant to me."

"Well then, forgive me," said he taking her hand, which had no longer the deadly cold feeling that had alarmed him, "forgive me, and let me talk to you of my plans, and consult with you about yours. Now you will have an establishment of your own, and as Lady Jane is married, you know it is my intention to dispose of my large house, and take a small one; for my income from my West India estates has fallen off greatly, and I wish to contract my expenses; besides, I shall never be easy till you, Lady Anne, are repaid."

"No more on that subject, sir," said Lady Anne coldly, "or you will offend me again."

"Well—well—I shall think, however, of it as much as I please. The Duke of L——— has offered me a large sum for it, and I mean to accept it. Poor man! he would fain have a mistress for it, and I believe he will very soon renew certain offers."

"I hope not," replied Lady Anne; "for, though I highly admire the Duke, my determination on that subject is irrevocable."

"Forgive me—I will proceed on business. I have heard of a small house near my son's in Piccadilly, and there I mean to reside. And now, Lady Anne, in what part of the town, and in what fine house, do you mean to take up your residence?—for I flatter myself that I shall have the satisfaction of seeing my old friend's daughter, and I may say the pride of my heart, living in a style worthy her rank and fortune."

"Some time hence you will, I trust," replied Lady Anne, deeply blushing, "but not yet."

"Not yet? What do you mean?"

"I mean that for a year or two I shall be contented to live in a small house in the vicinity of Percy and Lady Jane, and with a small establishment, and Mrs. Corbet has promised to live with me."

"I understand it—I understand you, Lady Anne, and I see very clearly that your bounty to your extravagant cousin is the cause of this, and I shudder to think of the extent of her involvements; for I concluded till now, that what I knew you to possess of personal property was expended on her, and not any part of your income."

"There you wrong Lady Jane, sir," cried Lady Anne haughtily; "my personal property,

great part of it I mean, has been expended in a still more satisfactory manner, and I earnestly beg that you will forbear to give even an opinion on my plans, as they are fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persians."

"Yet one word more—surely Percy and his bride will invite you to live with them?"

"O yes! they have done so—but I know better than to accede to such a proposal. Young married people ought to be left to themselves, and fix the way of life they are in future to follow."

"True, *very true*—but where is this small house to be found?"

"In Clarges-street—and if you please we will go and look at one that has been recommended to me—for I should wish to have your approbation of it."

Accordingly they drove to Clarges-street; and Mr. Percy, though grieved at the smallness of the house, could not but own that it was large enough for Lady Anne's, at present, reduced income; and with a heart more filled with reverence for her, and regret at his son's blindness, he parted with her on their return home,—he to dine with the Duke of L———, and Lady Anne to spend the rest of the day in her own apartments.

As he foresaw, the Duke renewed his offers now Percy was married, but still in vain;—and in a short time Lady Anne and Mrs. Corbet took possession of their new abode. Mr. Percy went to lodgings till his was ready for him, and the Duke of L——— went to the house in Grosvenor-square.

All these arrangements took place during the absence of the new-married pair, who at length returned to London to a very elegant house in Piccadilly. Percy looked, and evidently was, so happy, that his fond father could not help viewing with complacency the woman who made him so, and Lady Jane had every reason to be satisfied with the reception he gave her. But the joy she felt was damped by the sight of Lady Anne, whose excessive thinness and paleness called forth all the anxieties of her affectionate heart;—and when she was alone with her she burst into tears, and asked if she had been ill.

"No—not ill," replied Lady Anne, coldly, "and my paleness is only temporary:—time, by removing entirely the cause, will also remove the effect, and I assure you my mind is now quite at ease."

"I understand you," replied Lady Jane; "but believe me, in the midst of my own happiness I shall be uneasy till I see your usually fine colour as bright as ever. And now, Anne, let us order the carriage and drive to your house." They did so, and Lady Jane could not see without remorse amounting to agony, the humble mansion comparatively to that she ought to have inhabited, to which her errors had doomed her cousin.

"Grieve not for what to me is *no* source of grief," replied Lady Anne; "but repay me, if you think you owe me obligations, by abstaining in future from the follies, not to say *vices*, which forced me to live here. Alas! Jane, I have had more serious trials to bear, and I have borne them, I trust, well; nor of my *past* weakness, as I may *now* call it, is there, I hope, a *visible* trace left."

"I can assure you," said Lady Jane, "that it was *never* suspected by Percy—but his father hinted to him his suspicions."

"His father! did *he* suspect?"

"Yes;—but, like his son, he most probably has been convinced he was in an error by your recent conduct."

"My recent conduct!"

"Yes;—Percy told me he was now quite convinced, by your making such efforts to bring about our union, that you were not in love with him yourself—for, if you had been, you could not have done what you did."

Lady Anne listened at first in speechless wonder. "So, then!" thought she, "the greatest proof of pure disinterested love I could possibly give, he deemed a proof of the contrary! Well, I *rejoice*, though I *wonder* at his blindness!" "And pray, Jane," said she, "what did you answer to this curious speech?"

"I said that *I* could not have acted so to marry him to *you*—and there the conversation ended."

One morning some country cousins, accompanied by some London ladies, who were glad of an excuse for gratifying their own curiosity on pretence of gratifying that of their companions, called on the bride, and begged she would indulge her rural visiters with a sight of her wedding presents and wedding finery;—and Lady Jane, ever obliging, indulged their wishes.

"And this," said Lady Jane, "was Mr. Percy's gift, and this my uncle Lord ——'s;" and so she went on.

"But where is Lady Anne's? she is so rich!" said a lady who disliked Lady Anne; "she is so rich that no doubt her present is the handsomest of any." And while the conscious Lady Jane, who indeed knew the *magnificence* of *her* gift, blushed and hesitated, and would fain have been guilty of evasion, Lady Anne coldly replied, "Lady Jane has no gift of mine to show you."

"Dear me! how extraordinary!" cried one. "Ay, well—I suppose you save yourself for the christening gifts," said another; while all by looks and shrugs, and signs to each other, conveyed their astonishment at Lady Anne's meanness, who having, instead of a fine house and large establishment, settled herself in a quiet way in Clarges-street, had set many persons wondering and talking, and suspecting her of avarice; and this declaration of hers confirmed the idea.

"Yes, yes," again said one, resuming the

subject, "it is clear Lady Anne will make a most splendid christening offering!"

"Lady Anne has no such intention," she replied, distressed more at the pain Lady Jane suffered, than at their evident opinion of her meanness; and knowing Lady Jane, she every moment feared she would, to exculpate her, inculpate herself. Therefore she rose up and said, "I see clearly, ladies, what you now think of me, and you are welcome to laugh at my avarice as much as you please."

"Your avarice, Lady Anne!" cried Lady Jane, "you, the most generous——"

"Be quiet, Lady Jane, not a word more! and if you say one word further to vindicate me from censures which I despise, I shall look on it as a personal affront." Then, with a look which awed the company in spite of themselves, she left the room; and Lady Jane, but for her cousin's prohibition, would undoubtedly have betrayed herself, and expatiated on Lady Anne's kindness.

"O Anne!" said she when they were gone, "the misery I felt at hearing you blamed unjustly, was almost sufficient to expiate the error which occasioned it." Nor could she rest without telling Percy what had passed. But as he, when he heard it, exclaimed, "I am glad I was not present, for I should have affronted the women! What! dare to degrade by their suspicions the exalted goodness which not one of them could imitate!" Lady Jane was almost sorry that she had been so communicative.

If Lady Jane Langley was admired, Lady Jane Percy was adored.—Her name was given to every new and expensive fashion, and put at the top of dedications of numberless new works.—It figured also in the list of every public charity, it stood at the head of many a private one, and it every day adorned the columns of a fashionable paper. Lady Jane Percy at whole length or in half, was exhibited in the gallery of each fashionable artist, and engravings of her were hung in every print-shop; while Percy enjoyed this publicity as a homage due to the idol of his heart, and as a proof of her transcendant charms; for now she was his, he had too much generosity of nature, and too much confidence in her principles, to be jealous of her, and he looked forward to her approaching confinement as the only event wanting to complete his felicity.

That Lady Jane might have as little temptation as possible to run in debt, Percy had settled on her an allowance which even Lady Jane herself felt to be generous to excess, therefore he had no suspicion of her being again distressed in a pecuniary way; and though the consciousness that whatever she wore became the ton immediately, led her to vary her dress almost every morning and every evening, it never occurred to him that this could not be done but at a great expense. And as, unfortunately for his wife, he was too close an attendant on his duty in the House to accompany her often into some certain circles, he was also unconscious that she frequently entered into very deep play, and that the money solemnly destined in the morning to the payment of debts, and even to the purposes of charity, was lost in the evening in the intoxications of the gaming-table.

Lady Anne, meanwhile, was rarely her companion.—Resolved to see as little of Percy as possible, that the passion she believed extinct might run no danger of being revived, she seldom visited Lady Jane when he was at home; and after she had accompanied her to court, and gone the round of bridal visits with her, she preferred staying at home with her books, her music, and her work, to the giddy round of balls and assemblies, to which, untired as yet, the admired Lady Jane resorted. But Lady Anne had yet *another* amusement, which she fancied rational and innocent at the same time; and that was, daily studying the debates, for the delight of reading Percy's speeches; and while his thoughtless wife took no interest in his excelling eloquence, except when she heard it the theme of commendation from those whose praise was fame, Lady Anne knew every sentence that had commanded admiration, and was aware of every new motion which he was either to propose or second. Alas! while making him thus the occupier of her lonely hours, the Percy whom she beheld in imagination only, was more likely to be dangerous to her fancied freedom, than he could have been, beheld in reality; for, deprive any beloved object of the charms which our own imagination gives it, and love would soon be our slave, and never again our tyrant.

At length, Lady Jane became the mother of twins, and the delighted Lady Anne pressed to her kind bosom two sons of Percy's. But it was not without deep regret, which was shared by their mother, that Lady Anne heard her cousin forbidden, on account of the delicacy of her health, to be a nurse to her children, and was forced to see them fed by other care than the maternal one.

As soon as Lady Jane was able to go out again, Lady Anne, who had, during her cousin's confinement, seen more of Percy than she thought proper, returned to her own home, and her salutary occupations. But she was soon to have her peace disturbed by pangs of the sincerest sorrow and regret—pangs which continued to be felt by her, after Lady Jane and even Percy had ceased to feel them. Mr. Percy *did* live to see his son's sons, and to kiss with tears of pleasure the cheek of their happy mother; but he did not survive the birth of the heirs more than six weeks; and, though apparently in perfect health, he died suddenly when getting off his horse, a victim, as it appeared, to some disease of the heart. As

Percy equally loved and honoured his father, his grief at first was overwhelmingly severe; and Lady Jane, though more relieved than affected by Percy's loss, shut herself up at home, contented to support her husband by her presence and soothing fondness, under the violence of his sorrow; and Lady Anne, spite of herself, was forced to come to the house of mourning, to alleviate Percy's grief by the evident sincerity with which she shared in it.

"You may well weep, dear Anne," said Lady Jane, "for he loved, he adored you above all women; and you will miss the pleasure of praise from lips from which approbation was honour!"

Lady Anne made no reply, for she felt that it was not natural for Lady Jane to deplore Mr. Percy's death as much as she did, and she honoured her integrity in not feigning what she did not feel. But Lady Anne only too soon learnt to deplore Mr. Percy sudden and untimely decease, on Lady Jane's account as well as her own, for she soon saw that he had been a check on Lady Jane's thoughtless expenditure.

As soon as propriety warranted her return into the gay world, Lady Jane, presuming on the addition to their income which Mr. Percy's death occasioned, and unawed by the dread of his reproofs, launched forth into greater expenses than ever, and gave entertainments of almost eastern magnificence. Even Percy himself became alarmed; and as soon as Lady Jane found that, if informed of any intended decoration for an evening's fête, Percy positively and peremptorily forbade them, she got into a habit of giving her orders without consulting him; and when he expostulated, she always assured him that these decorations were only for effect, and that they really cost nothing worth mentioning; an assurance which she believed true, because, as she never looked at the bills, she was not aware how great was her extravagance. It was for the interest of his happiness that Percy should believe her statement, and he *did* believe it; while Lady Anne, awakened to anxious alarm, felt consoled for the removal of Mr. Percy, by the sad conviction that a scene must soon be unfolded which would have filled him with sorrow and indignation. Afraid to speak, yet scarcely able to remain silent, Lady Anne therefore, whose lease of her house was now nearly expired, was no longer averse to reside with Percy and Lady Jane, for a short time at least, that she might be thereby enabled to have the means of judging accurately of what was passing, and she promised to remove to Piccadilly as soon as the term for which her house was taken had actually expired.

One morning that Lady Jane was to call on Lady Anne to go out with her on business, she arrived while the latter was engaged with her solicitor, and accordingly chose to wait in a small room on the ground-floor. In this room lady Jane found a poor woman shabbily clothed, and her whole person and appearance indicative of poverty and distress. To the misery which she *beheld*, Lady Jane's heart was always vulnerable; and after surveying the poor woman at first in compassionate silence, she at length asked the cause of her evident unhappiness.

"O madam," she replied, "I am so wretched, and it is all along of a great rich lady who won't pay us our due, and so we fear we must go to the workhouse; but, indeed, my Sam says he won't go there, but will run away and list for a sojer first, and then what is to become of me and my poor baby!"

"You shall not go to the workhouse, I promise you that," said Lady Jane. "But who is this lady that will not pay you your just debts? Surely, if she knew of your distress, she would! It cannot be the lady of this house!"

"She! No, God bless her! But, howsomever, there is no need to name names and make hinnemies, you know; and if so be as she pay me at last, it is all very well, though to be sure as how I ha'n't slept for many a night from the thought of Sam's listing."

"Poor creature!" said Lady Jane affectionately. "But Sam shall *not* list, I'll take care of that. But what is the debt?"

"O, madam, it is only 50*l.*"

"No more?"

"Oh, and enough too for us poor folks to miss it. You see as how, madam, my husband works at a builder's, and this great lady wanted to have a temporary building run up for one of her feats; but she grudged the money belike which my husband's master charged, and sure enough it was a great charge! So what does my poor Sam do to turn a penny, but he follows the ladyship's agent out and says, says he, 'I would engage to do that job for much less.' 'Would you?' says she; and accordingly Sam was employed; but by the time he had got the materials and all that, the job came to 50*l.* and he still was paid little or nothing for his trouble. Howsomever, the lady liked what he did; though, after all, she never paid for it, and I never, no never, could get to the speech of her during this whole year."

"But has the lady no husband? If she has, why not send the bill to him?"

"Oh, because she don't like her husband to know of her bills, and so her maid take 'em, and keep them for fear the master get hold of them; and so I can't get paid, and we must go to a workhouse, and Sam for a sojer; not to mention a bad fever in the workhouse, and I am afflicted with a lungs cough."

"How dreadfully unprincipled this lady must be!" said Lady Jane. "But here, good woman, though I can but ill spare it, here are

20*l.* towards the 50*l.* and I dare say Lady Anne will give the rest."

The poor woman was so overjoyed that she could scarcely speak her thanks; at length she said:

"But, dear lady, if the great lady will pay us our right, we need not take any from Lady Anne and you; and I came here because they said she had such tie like over her, that she, mayhap, could prevail on her to pay us."

"How!" exclaimed Lady Jane turning pale, "has Lady Anne such influence over the lady? What is your name?"

"Sarah Boddam."

"And the lady herself? answer me, I conjure you. Is it Lady Jane Percy?"

"That's she, sure enough." And Lady Jane, conscience-stricken, sunk into a chair, and hid her face in her hands.

"Dear me! what is the matter?" cried the poor woman, approaching her. At this moment Lady Anne entered; and surprised to see Lady Jane at all, as she had not been announced, and especially in that room, she was still more surprised to see her in evident agitation, and the poor woman in evident confusion.

"What does this mean?" cried Lady Anne. "Speak to me, dear Jane, and tell me what has happened; is your husband, is Percy ill?"

The names of Jane and Percy showed the poor woman to whom she had been talking, and of whom complaining; and frightened in the highest degree, she laid down the twenty pound note, which she had now, she thought, little prospect of keeping, and was running out of the room, when Lady Jane exclaimed;

"Stay, I desire you; stay where you are. Anne," she added, "dear Anne, despise me if you will, but pay my debt to that poor wronged woman."

"Oh dear, my lady, I am sure, my lady, I did not think, and I can't think—"

"Be silent, woman," cried Lady Anne, roughly, "and let one of you, at least, speak to be understood."

While Lady Anne was thus speaking, Barnes came eagerly into the room, saying to Lady Jane, "Oh, my lady, Mrs. Ellis has sent your new court-dress after you, which Miss —— has sent home to know if she shall put more point and silver fringe on it?" and as she spoke she displayed the costly dress in all its extravagant beauty. Lady Anne, turning round, fixed her expressive eyes on the humbled and penitent Lady Jane, then said:

"Has your ladyship any fresh orders to give?"

"No, no, lay the dress down, Barnes, I will call and speak about it," replied Lady Jane; while the poor woman, gazing with surprise at splendour such as she had never seen before, wondered no longer that Lady Jane could not pay her bills.

"To be as concise as possible, Lady Anne," said Lady Jane, in a voice of suppressed agitation, "that poor woman and her husband have been driven to the greatest distress, and to the prospect of a workhouse, by my not paying them a bill of 50*l.* Pay it, and save me from their curses and my own!"

"Oh dear! my lady, I am sure I should not have cursed you, my lady."

"Peace, woman! I tell you," cried Lady Anne, angrily. "We ought to curse no one; still I could almost forgive the sufferers by the vices of the *Great*, as they call the rich and the noble, and as we call ourselves, if, in the bitterness of their hearts, they *did* curse the thoughtless extravagance which, itself unchastised, drives them often to a workhouse and a prison."

"You are severe, Anne."

"May be, but I am just."

"Dear me, my lady!" again observed Mrs. Boddam, "the lady looks so sorry and so ashamed that I could not have the heart to—"

"Must I again desire to hear none of your remarks! They fret me beyond my patience. Here, I will write you a draft on my banker for the money directly. There—take it, and begone!" And while the terrified woman, with a thousand curtsies and thanks, and even tears of joy, came up to Lady Anne to receive the draft, Lady Jane said, "Really, Anne, your words are so rough, and your manner so violent, you alarm the poor woman."

"My words are rough, but my actions kind," she replied. "Your words are kind, but your actions cruel. I wonder which, in the eyes of God or man, is the more estimable."

The conscious Lady Jane did not attempt to reply.

The good woman waited till Lady Anne had done speaking, to make her last curtsy; to which Lady Anne replied by a kind nod of the head; then calling after her, she said—

"Be sure to tell the servant to write down where you are to be found, in case I wish to inquire after you."

Mrs. Boddam, whose fear of Lady Anne, had not power to overcome her gratitude, turned on her eyes so full of joy and grateful emotion, that Lady Anne, too much affected to speak, again nodded adieu, and shutting the door returned to the wretched and self-convicted Lady Jane, who relieved her feelings a little, by relating to Lady Anne the whole of what had passed while Lady Anne was preparing for the projected drive.

"Well, Jane," said Lady Anne, kindly forbearing to dwell on the repented fault, "shall we go first to Miss ——'s about the dress?"

"Name it not," cried Lady Jane, "I shall never be able to bear the sight of it again, and if I go it shall only be to beg *her* to dispose of it.—I cannot, *indeed* I cannot, incur the guilt of buying it now, or rather of running in

debt for it,—and I know Lady Laurel would gladly purchase it."

"If you really *wish* to part with it," said Lady Anne kindly, "you need not wait Lady Laurel's decision,—for *I* will purchase it."

"You! Anne, you!"

"Yes—I;—for I mean to go to court on the birth-day."

"But it will be too *short* for you!"

"Oh! Barnes can lengthen it. Therefore if you are in earnest, the dress is mine, and shall be paid for to-day; and if you think more point and silver necessary, you shall give your orders accordingly, for I wish to have it as handsome as it can be made."

"If I am in earnest! To be sure I am;—and I, yes! I will go in an old dress." And the sigh she gave while speaking these words sufficiently proved that she felt the sacrifice she was making.—Lady Anne kindly praised her resolution, and they set off for Miss ——'s; where such additions were made to the dress as Lady Jane recommended, and Lady Anne, seemingly delighted with her purchase, returned home in unusual spirits.

At length the birth-day arrived; and Lady Jane, having made an old court-dress as smart as she could, was preparing to put it on; when Lady Anne, dressed in a simple white crape with a white satin train, and all its ornaments, pearls and white roses, entered her apartment, ready for court, and, dismissing Ellis, spoke to the astonished Lady Jane as follows:—"I have tried your resolution, dearest Jane, on a point in which it has usually been most vulnerable, and I have seen with delight that it has stood the trial nobly.—You have now for once practised the virtue of self-denial, and I flatter myself that the pleasure which has been the result to you from the consciousness of your firmness will tempt you to the exertion of similar forbearance in future. But as all virtue is the more stable, I believe, for being propped with rewards and praises, I must tell you I never thought of purchasing the dress for myself, but as a present for you, and you will see it lying on your own bed ready to be put on."

Perhaps Lady Jane had never known a much happier moment! She, even she, had earned the most rich and beautiful dress she had ever fancied, by an act of self-denial. But, in a different way, Lady Anne was as much pleased as Lady Jane; and it was with hearts full of renewed, and even strengthened affection towards each other, that they proceeded to St. James's. But, alas! all Lady Jane's good feelings were evanescent, and her repentance only bloomed like the gum cistus, that sheds its leaves almost as soon as they are blown, and Lady Anne's hopes of her amendment were again blighted.

Yes; Mr. Percy was indeed a restraint on the extravagance of Lady Jane; and she proved that he had been so, by prevailing on her indulgent husband to make great and unnecessary alterations in the seat belonging to the family, as soon as his father's death made him possessor of that memorable mansion. Percy thought, indeed, that the house which had suited his noble and exemplary mother might have satisfied the pride and the taste of his wife; but the yieldingness of his temper, assisted by the natural indolence of his disposition, and that unuttered but conscious sentiment, which I believe has ruined many wives, "any thing for a quiet life," made Percy submit to what he did not approve. And, in a short time after Mr. Percy was no more, the house at Percy Park was filled with workmen, who were going to modernize entirely that side of it which commanded the south-west, and a beautiful plain watered by a meandering stream, which stream was now to roll along a widely-spreading river; but the other side, which looked on rocks and mountains, and frowned in castellated grandeur, was allowed to retain its gloomy antiquity.

"Yes, Anne," said Lady Jane to her cousin, who was alarmed at the idea of these changes, both from principle and taste, "you need not fear; I mean to keep the grand, but add the agreeable; in short, I mean that one side of my house should resemble *you*, and the other *me*. Agreeable, in every sense of the word, will I endeavour to render my mansion both inside and out; books, statues, paintings, gems, and medals, shall crowd the modern part of the edifice;—and here shall

——from the mould to conscious being start
Those finer forms, the miracles of art;
Here chosen gems, impressed on sulphur, shine,
That slept for ages in a second mine;

and here—

——————its warmest hues the pencil flings,
Lo! here the lost restores, the absent brings,
And still the few best loved, and most revered,
Rise round the board their social smile endear'd,"

added Lady Jane, leading Lady Anne to the dining-room, which was already hung with portraits by the first artists. "Now follow me to the library," she exclaimed, "here shall I

——while the shaded lamp's mild lustre streams,
Read ancient books, or woe-inspiring dreams;
And when a sage's bust arrests me here,
Pause, and his features with his thoughts compare.
Ah! most that art my grateful rapture calls,
Which breathes a soul into the silent walls,
Which gathers round the will of ev'ry tongue,
All on whose words departed nations hung,
Still prompt to charm with many a converse sweet,
Guides in the world, companions in retreat.'"*

"Well but, dear Jane," observed Lady Anne, "could you not have dined in the dining-room as it was before, and have your friends around you, without these expensive

* For all the lines quoted by Lady Jane on this occasion, see "Rogers's Epistle to a Friend."

alterations? Could you not have read in the study, such as our dear guardian left it?"

"Why, to be sure I could, when hungry, eat in a room, however ugly; when studious, I could read in a library, however untastily fitted up; but no rooms are the worse for being fashioned by the hand of Taste."

"No; the rooms, Jane, will not be the worse, but their owners may; for Taste is always followed by its evil genius, 'Expense.'"

"Its evil genius, Anne? No, not so, when wealth and power warrant its attendance on Taste."

"True, but——"

"Nay, nay—no buts, most beautiful Mentor! for, remember, in all that I am now doing I have my husband's approbation."

This was indeed true, and Percy was charmed and gratified when he beheld the result of Lady Jane's creative taste; while even Lady Anne smiled with admiring wonder, as she surveyed the beauties it had imparted, when all the decorations were completely finished. But neither Lady Anne nor Percy continued to smile when the bills came in, and Lady Jane herself was startled and alarmed when she found that the expenditure was more than double the estimate! Nor did the expense stop there. As Lady Jane had contrived a music-room, she must have concerts; and during the four months which they passed at Percy Park, musical professors must be there as their guests. As she had erected a room which could be converted into a private theatre, she must have private theatricals, and Percy found that, whether in town or country, expenditure of a most enormous nature attended him from night till morning, as the Furies on the persecuted Orestes. Still he was not much distressed, because he knew that his income was equal to all his apparent expenses; but had he been aware that Lady Jane's expenses which he did not know, were equal to those with which he was acquainted, he would indeed have lost all peace of mind, and have been roused to exertions of authority, which would have checked, though they would not probably have cured her thoughtless extravagance. Still, though Percy did not find in the country the retirement which he sought, he loved the months which he passed at Percy Park, because he had there more enjoyment of his wife's and children's society; for Lady Jane, though she could not give up the dear delight of reigning as mistress of the revels in the country, and displaying her fine taste in festal decorations, had the good feeling and the grateful affection, whatever guests she had at her house, to devote her whole mornings to her husband; and all the hours which intervened from the time when she rose to that when she retired to dress for dinner, she spent in walking, riding, driving, or reading with Percy.

At length Lady Anne, having been seduced by the love almost maternal, which she began to feel for the children, and by the hope of being some restraint on the errors of Lady Jane, to consent finally to become their guest, for some months at least, was, when those months were at an end, persuaded to stay still longer. But though the first months of her stay with them were pleasant, she soon found that the ensuing ones would make her continued residence not only painful but improper; it was also soon evident to her that Lady Jane was not only unhappy, but that something weighed heavily on her mind, and she could not but attribute it to her being again deeply involved in debt, from which she was resolved that she would not even attempt to free her. Besides, like all persons displeased with *themselves*, Lady Jane was captious and irascible with *others;* and very often, when Lady Anne had not the remotest idea of adverting to such a subject, she would accuse her of reproaching her with the obligations she had conferred on her. But it was not the pains so much as the pleasures of residing under her cousin's roof, that determined the conscientious Lady Anne to quit it. Percy, since Lady Anne became their guest, had found her conversation so pleasant, and was so gratified by the evident interest which she took in his success as an orator, and the every day increasing fame which he acquired, that, instead of accompanying Lady Jane to dinner parties, he more than once preferred dining at home with Lady Anne (who rarely dined out) and his little boys, who, now three years old, were permitted to dine at table with their mamma Anne, or rather ate *their supper* while she dined; and it was always very reluctantly that Percy left his home, thus rendered agreeable to him in a more domestic way than it had lately been by Lady Jane, even to repair to the House, and pursue the line of life which he so warmly loved.

Nor was it long before Lady Jane became alarmed at the evident delight he took in her cousin's society; for her good sense taught her that beauty, and even that power of attraction which Percy denominated charm, must lose its influence by custom over any husband however fond; unless its sway be maintained by solid and superior qualities of mind and heart, which, like pure gold on which enamel has been worked, retain their value when the enamel is worn away. She was only conscious that, if compared to Lady Anne, she must shine with diminished lustre in Percy's eyes; and she was also conscious that, though enamel might very well represent *her*, Lady Anne was better designated by sterling gold. Besides, she thought, and justly too, that Lady Anne, if conscious that she pleased, would in time study to be pleasing; and Percy himself had said, that if Lady Anne would but condescend to be agreeable, she would be

irresistible—"and alas!" cried Lady Jane, "have I not obscured all my graces in the eyes of my husband, by errors which not even the most partial fondness can excuse?"

While these saddening thoughts were passing in Lady Jane's mind, Lady Anne was calling herself to a strict account for the delight her thoughts afforded her. She could not but feel, and the consciousness was delightful to her, that Percy took greater pleasure in her society than in that of any one, and this she considered as an injury to Lady Jane.—"Well then, it shall, it must be relinquished," thought Lady Anne; but aware that, if she lived in London, he would be perhaps her most frequent visiter, she resolved to give up all idea of fixing her future establishment in London, and secretly gave orders to have a fine old castle in Wales, which she inherited in right of her mother, got ready for her reception. "Again," said she to herself, "the hall of my fathers shall resound to the loud welcome of hospitality, and the harp shall awaken the echoes of its walls;" but she sighed to think that she must leave the lovely children behind her; might she be permitted to take little Harry Percy with her, she should be contented; nay, more, she would be happy! But she still kept her plans unrevealed, lest she should be exposed to solicitations to alter them, which, as she knew they would be unavailing, it would be irksome to her to hear.

In the meantime Lady Jane continued to run her giddy career, while though she still was the object of Percy's love, she every day diminished in his esteem. One day, while Lady Anne was sitting with Lady Jane in her dressing-room, Percy came in with an air and manner considerably agitated; and while Lady Jane with a wife's conscious right could ask what had so evidently disturbed him, Lady Anne, though equally anxious, could only dare to look the anxiety which she felt.

"Do *you* ask what *ails* me, Jane?" said Percy. "Then I will tell you; but I already feel that I am a fool to be so disturbed; the truth is, that I came suddenly upon your maid Ellis, as she was reading a long paper which I took for a bill, and which, seeing me, she tried in great confusion to put in her pocket. Alarmed at this and rendered suspicious by former occurrences, I sternly demanded what it was she was so eager to conceal? on which, she blushing and stammering replied, 'Sir, it is, sir, a letter from a young man who is with the armies;' and I let her depart unquestioned further; but she might or she might *not* speak truth; however, I was willing to hope the *first*." Here he paused, checked by the pale cheek, the downcast eye of his conscious wife.

"I know," said the equally alarmed Lady Anne, "that Ellis has a lover with the armies."

"Has she?" returned Percy eagerly. "Thank you! God bless you for that assurance, kind Lady Anne!"

"I see you are very suspicious now, Percy," said Lady Jane faintly.

"But, still dear Jane, tell me if I have not an excuse for being so.—O believe me, to be able to confide implicitly in your prudence is the dearest wish of my soul; and I do, indeed I do, frequently repeat to myself—'No, let me not distrust her; she cannot be so cruel, she cannot be so base, or so ungrateful to her noble-minded cousin, to go on as she formerly did; she loves me too well, and Lady Anne too well; nor would she bear to run even the risk, which she would do, of losing——'"

"Of losing what?" asked Lady Jane.

"Of losing me and my affections for ever; for were you, best beloved of my heart as you now are, to involve yourself, and consequently me, in pecuniary embarrassments again, I would, though my heart bled with pity and tenderness at every pore, I would cease to live with you, and separate from you for ever!"

So saying, pale and agitated as Lady Jane herself, he suddenly and hastily left the room.

"Then I am lost!" cried Lady Jane, throwing herself back on a sofa, and clasping her hands in agony.

"Lost! say you?" exclaimed Lady Anne with more indignation than tenderness, "can it indeed be true that you have deserved the sad penalty which your husband has threatened you with?"

"It is indeed true," she replied, "that I have incurred fresh debts; and unless you can and will assist me," she added with an agony of tears, and catching Lady Anne's hand, "you will soon see Percy wretched, and me not only an outcast from his affections but his roof."

Lady Anne indignantly withdrew her hand, regarding her guilty cousin with looks of angry contempt. Lady Jane felt them to the bottom of her heart; while pride, and that pettishness the result of conscious degradation, prompted her to reply.

"Well, Lady Anne, if nothing less than my being punished for my faults by the loss of my husband's love and protection will satisfy your rigid ideas of retributive justice, be it so.—Yet I would advise your ladyship to scrutinize accurately your own motives for this rejection of the prayer of my misery. Take care lest it be because the idea of my losing the heart of Percy is an agreeable one to your imagination, and therefore you wish it to be realized."

"Fallen as you were before in my esteem," replied Lady Anne with one of her most haughty and contemptuous looks, "this speech has sunk you still lower; but I am not to be frightened, by the dread of incurring your mean suspicions, into an action which my judgment may condemn; nor can any consideration for myself, Lady Jane, impel me to

what I look upon as wrong conduct. Had you, madam, endeavoured to move my feelings by picturing to me your own probable misery, and the anguish of your husband when your unworthiness shall be made known to him, you would have succeeded better."

Long before Lady Anne had done speaking, the self-judged Lady Jane had felt every sensation of pride vanish into humility almost amounting to abjectness; and when she had finished speaking, she sunk on her knees before her justly offended cousin, and begged her to forgive the petulance of a self-convicted and desperate woman.

"And is it the envied wife of Percy whom I behold thus desperate and thus degraded!" thought Lady Anne; "she, who might have been the happiest of the happy....."

"Rise, Lady Jane," said Lady Anne, "nor add such base self-humiliation to the faults already committed. Your present words, your looks, are more calculated certainly to affect me than your former ones, and have almost conquered my repugnance to squander on you, and the payment of the debts of extravagant profligacy, the money which would, either lent or given to honest industrious tradesmen, have saved them from ruin, or have laid the foundation of their future independence. O God of benevolence and justice," she added, clasping her hands and raising her eyes to heaven, "how can I answer to thee this waste of thy indulgent bounty!"

"Is there no ruin," answered Lady Jane, (who, like all persons accustomed to be in debt and to borrow money, had lost all feelings of delicacy,) "is there no ruin but ruin in trade that it would be virtue to prevent? Is not the ruin of a friend's peace of mind, of a relation's fair fame, entitled to equal if not superior consideration? Can you without horror recollect the dreadful state of agitation in which your and my beloved Percy left the room, only on the bare *suggestion* of what will soon be a reality? Can you bear to dwell on the image of this house deprived of its mistress by the publication of her errors? and Percy of the wife who, perhaps, even spite of her faults, he may cherish in the recesses of his heart? Can you bear to fancy me, your once loved Jane, the companion of your youth, wearing away the rest of life in retirement, which the pangs of conscious degradation will forbid me either to enjoy, or to improve; while I every day undermine that life of misery, by having recourse to opiates to suspend my sense of suffering? Oh! Lady Anne, if your timely assistance could prevent the realization of this picture, would it not be as great an act of benevolence to afford it for that purpose, as to aid one tradesman, or make the fortune of another?"

Lady Anne shuddered while she listened to her; for she well knew that the picture, now only the creature of imagination, might only too soon become a reality; and after communing with herself some time in silence, she at last said, — "I have at this moment in my banker's hands a pretty considerable sum; it was destined for other purposes; but if this sum can be of use in removing your embarrassments, and preserving you and Percy from the horrors you have described, and I foresee, it is at your service; but—" Here Lady Jane interrupted her by clamorous expressions of gratitude, and an embrace which Lady Anne as yet could not prevail on herself to return.

"Don't interrupt me," said Lady Anne;— "I wish to tell you that *more* I cannot, *will* not do; and if you are ever involved again, you must take the consequences of your own actions, and, however reluctantly, disclose all to your husband. My paternal estates are, you know, entailed on the male heir; but I have the fee of those which I derive from my mother; and I can, if I choose, sell or do what I please with one of them; but this I will not do, for the sake of one very dear to me. The elder of your twins, Lionel Percy, must be a rich man, while the younger can only inherit a younger brother's fortune. But as I positively shall never marry, I mean to adopt the little Harry, and for him preserve my landed property inviolate; I mean, with your and his father's approbation."

"Our approbation, Anne! And can you suppose that we shall withhold it, even at the risk of your one day changing your mind and marrying?"

"Marrying! No—that I shall never do. Now, let me tell you my plans; instead of having an establishment in London, it is my intention to reside, probably all the year round, at a castle I have in Wales, and I this day received a letter from my agent to say that it is ready for me; and I have also a letter from my relation, Mrs. Tyrawley, telling me that she and her daughter will most gladly accept my invitation to live with me, and they will meet me at my new residence next week."

"Next week!" exclaimed Lady Jane; "and will you indeed leave me, and so soon?" while the consciousness that ere long she would require Lady Anne to stand between her and her husband's anger, shook her whole frame with evident emotion.

"I am resolved," said Lady Anne;—"a London life does not suit me; to me it is heartless all; and though I occasionally meet at your parties, and at others, such society as it is both instructive and honourable to be one of; still, these happy evenings are the few, and insipid ones the many; but in my new abode I shall have rational pursuits, leisure to follow them, and active duties to fulfil; a numerous tenantry to make happy; and I shall be able to witness the happiness which I promote."

"But in the meanwhile you will leave your adopted son!"

"Ay, that will be a pang, but——"

"But what? would you have us resign him to you?"

"Oh! mock me not with a thought so blissful!"

"Nay, Anne, whatever it costs me, if Percy will consent and you will go, the little Harry shall go with you;" and Lady Anne's heart being by this means softened towards her cousin, she threw herself on her neck and warmly articulated her thanks. Lady Anne, though she loved home, doted on Harry Percy, perhaps because his name was Harry, and she also saw in him a likeness of his father; and to be able, while avoiding on principle further association with the father, to recompense herself by being of use to the son, was an idea so full of exquisite enjoyment, that Lady Anne could not thank Lady Jane enough for having given it utterance, and promised to give it substance.

Not to dwell on this subject, in a few days all was ready for Lady Anne's departure, and Percy consented that little Harry should go with her, and be in future her adopted child! But so great was the sorrow he expressed at the idea of parting with Lady Anne as well as Harry, that Lady Jane could not help rejoicing, regardless of her own involvements, that she was going away.

At length the carriage, a new and handsome one, drawn by four horses, and attended by two outriders in the Mortimer livery, drew up to the door, followed by an elegant little phaeton with four post-horses; and for the first time, since she came of age, the daughter of the Marquis of D—— had an equipage suited to her rank in life.

"Do, Jane," said Percy, "come to the window, and look at your cousin's new carriages. This is as it should be, Lady Anne. How pleased my poor father would have been to see this day!"

This speech, though not meant as such, Lady Jane could not help taking as a reproach to her, whose extravagance had caused Lady Anne's economy, and instead of going to the window she burst into tears. But Percy, attributing her emotions to sorrow at parting with Lady Anne, and a consequent dislike to see the carriage which was to convey her away, sat down by her, and affectionately assured her he sympathized with her most sincerely in her grief at losing her cousin. At this moment the little Harry was led in by his attendant; and Percy, with a quivering lip, took him in his arms and kissed his happy face, radiant with the expected delight of riding in a carriage along with dear mamma Anne.

"Take him, he is yours, dear Lady Anne," said Percy, giving him to her arms; "and to no one less beloved, less honoured, would I entrust a charge so precious."

Percy's manner was solemn, and Lady Anne caught its solemnity; for, catching the child to her bosom, she raised her fine eyes as if calling on heaven to witness her engagement to do her utmost duty by the child so committed to her care, and bowed her head on his, in order to express the pleased acquiescence which she could not trust her voice to articulate.

"Yes, dear Lady Anne," continued he,—"the child is yours; and if you make him in any degree resemble you, he will be all a father's heart can wish him."

"Come, let us go," said the child, interrupting the general silence of emotion, "Harry wants to go ride with mamma Anne."

"Little wretch!" said Lady Jane, "he is not at all sorry to leave me. Harry, are you not vexed to leave poor mamma Jane?"

"No, no—I like to go with mamma Anne; but we come again to see you,—shan't we, Anne?"

"At least we hope mamma Jane will come and see us."

"Yes, yes—mamma Jane come to us.—Good bye, Jane," holding up his pretty mouth to her.

Lady Jane clasped him in her arms, weeping even to sobbing as she did so.

"We had better go and not prolong this painful scene," said Lady Anne, herself visibly affected; and having clasped her cousin in a long and affectionate embrace, she gave her hand to Percy, and in a short time found herself in the carriage; while Percy, taking the child from his attendant's arms, kissed him for the last time, and, without uttering a word, saw the carriages drive off. That evening, Lady Jane's spirits were so depressed from the loss of her cousin and her child, that she gave up three engagements, and stayed at home with her husband, in whose eyes she consequently looked more amiable than she had done for many months.

Lady Anne, meanwhile, was on her journey into Caernarvonshire, and much happier than she had been for some time. Percy had confided his child to her care, desiring her to make him all a father's heart could wish by *making him like herself*; and Lady Anne could not help giving herself up to all the delight this idea occasioned her. Lady Anne, when she approached Green Rock, the name of her castle, found that she had judged right in coming to it with a splendid equipage, as her tenants would have been disappointed if she had done otherwise; for they all came out to meet her in their best apparel, to welcome her to the abode of her ancestors. Mrs. Tyrawley and her daughter were waiting also to receive her, and what with the pleasure and gratitude they expressed at being invited to live under her roof, the delight of the child at the horses and their riders, and the harpers raising the strain of welcome in the grand hall of entrance, the beauty of the country, and the fineness of the

weather, Lady Anne felt an almost overpowering sensation of pleasure, and a scarcely defined wish to live and die where she was.

In a short time the Tyrawleys had their suite of rooms allotted to them, and Lady Anne hers; and Lady Anne began the education of little Harry Percy. She had taken, while in Clarges-street, an instructer in the Latin language, the rudiments of which her father had taught her, and she succeeded in learning enough of Latin to enable her to be of great use to her young charge; but finding that the village curate was learned, virtuous, and poor, she hired him, at a salary double that which he asked, to assist her in educating her adopted son; while Miss Tyrawley, who had once been a governess in a family that had travelled and resided abroad, undertook to teach him meanwhile as much as should be necessary of French and Italian.

While the little Harry, now four years old, was taught useful and regular habits of application, his health and Lady Anne's too were much improved by daily exercise; and every morning before breakfast Lady Anne and Harry breathed the fine air of the mountains, and returned to breakfast as blooming as the natives themselves. Indeed, now she had an object on whom her affections could with propriety be placed, and all the benevolent usefulness of her nature exercised, Lady Anne was become a different being, and she resembled Gray's description of "Cheerfulness:"

"———a nymph of healthiest hue,
Her buskins gemm'd with morning dew;"

while the hours, which during her residence at Lady Jane's had hung occasionally so heavily on her hands, now flew with incredible rapidity. When she had been at Green Rock three months Percy came down for a few days, and was charmed to see his child grown and improved both in mind and body, even in that short time; and when he departed he expressed his hope of bringing Lady Jane down when the London season was over; and Lady Anne's delicacy and judgment were better satisfied with the prospect of seeing him accompanied by Lady Jane, than they had been by his visiting Green Rock alone.

When Percy returned to London, Lady Jane was pained, though pleased, to hear with what delight he spoke of his visit, and of the improvement visible already in his little boy; and she took occasion to observe, that it would be a pity a woman so calculated to undertake the education of children should not herself be a wife and a mother.

"She will be both, I hope and trust," said Percy eagerly, "one day or other, for I do not mind her resolutions to the contrary."

"And do you *really* wish Lady Anne to marry?" as eagerly returned his wife.

"To be sure I do. Can you think so meanly of me, as to suppose that any consideration for my child's interest could make me so base as to wish Lady Anne not to fill that situation for which her virtues qualify her?"

Lady Jane had *no such* meaning; but she had no objection to Percy's remaining ignorant what her real meaning was; and assuring him that she spoke without much thought, she left him to dress for a party, a good deal relieved by the assurance that he did wish Lady Anne to marry.

Three months after this, Percy entered Lady Jane's dressing-room one morning with a strong expression of pleasure on his countenance, which he explained by telling her, that by a letter from his solicitor, he learnt he had recovered for him a debt of several thousand pounds which his father had given up for lost. But Lady Jane's pleasure at this intelligence was completely destroyed by what followed; "therefore," added Percy, "I shall be able to fulfil my poor mother's wishes, which were, that I should sue for a barony that is in her family; her family being, though not as old and noble as my father's, a very respectable one, with a title in abeyance. I know that it will cost me some thousands to succeed; but my right is indisputable; and though I should grieve much to leave the Lower House, it is on my conscience to try to get into the Upper one. Therefore this money comes to whet my almost blunted purpose. But what is the matter, Jane? you seem going to faint!" And so she was, so much had Percy's intentions overset her. But Percy attributing her illness to her situation, which she had just disclosed to him, suspected not that it originated in a moral cause, and after seeing her a little revived he left her to the care of Ellis.

As soon as he was gone, she gave way to the utmost violence of despair, and shutting herself up alone she paced the room in almost frenzied violence; for, having lately prevailed on herself to look over the bills which Ellis had brought her, she had convinced herself that at least two-thirds of the money that Percy had recovered would be necessary to discharge her debts, which must soon be disclosed, although the sum given her by Lady Anne had served to pacify some of the most clamorous creditors. Could she then be so treacherous and base as to allow Percy to enter into the expenses of law proceedings, when she well knew he would be distressed for money to defray them! No; she could be extravagant, and even viciously prodigal; but she could not so far betray the confidence of a generous husband; and she resolved, therefore, though at the certain risk of being, as she told Lady Anne, "not only an outcast from Percy's affections, but from his roof also," to confess the whole of her delinquency, and show him the necessity of appropriating his thousands, not in the acquisition of new honours to himself, but in preserving some little reputation of common honesty to *her*. But how could she

endure to meet his agonies and his resentment upon the first disclosure? She could not do it, and therefore resolved to write the disclosure, and set off unknown to him to Lady Anne's abode, there to remain till the first storm of his feelings had subsided, and to await there his final decision respecting her future destination; for, after what he had said, she had no idea that he would doom her to a less punishment than banishment. Accordingly, after a night of wretchedness, passed on pretence of illness in a separate apartment from her husband, Lady Jane arranged every thing for her departure with Ellis, her unavoidable confidante. As soon therefore as Percy went out on his usual morning walk, the letter of disclosure was laid on the table in his library. Then telling the servants she was going out for a drive into the country, Lady Jane and Ellis got into a post-chaise, without the former having dared to trust herself to see her little Lionel, and she desired the postilion to drive in the exact contrary direction to Wales; but in the next street she gave different orders, and arrived in a frame of mind the most pitiable at the end of the first stage on the road to Green Rock. Here, though very ill, she took fresh horses and proceeded; but at the end of the second stage she was too unwell to go on, and before night she had symptoms of fever.

Percy meanwhile had been unavoidably detained from home till a late hour, and on his return the first question was, "How is your lady?"

"My lady is very well, I believe, sir," said the servants, "for her ladyship and Ellis are gone out in a post-chaise to drive into the country."

"In a post-chaise! Why not in the carriage?" cried Percy. But recollecting himself, he concluded that Lady Jane was gone on some errand of charity, and did not choose to be known, and void of all alarm he entered his library; nor, though he saw a letter there directed to him in Lady Jane's own hand, did he believe it was any thing more than an explanation of her errand into the country with Ellis. His surprise and his misery therefore were unspeakable when he read the letter, and found that Lady Jane had withdrawn herself from his resentment. "But she has done *wisely*," said he, "and I thank her; for, had I seen her in the first transports of my just resentment, I might perhaps have reproached her too bitterly."

That livelong night he passed in sleepless wretchedness; but when morning dawned he had contrived to think himself into more composure; for he had taught himself to set against her guilt in incurring so vast a debt, her generosity in avowing it, in order to prevent his commencing a suit, of which it would not be in his power to pay the unavoidable expenses; "And she did it too," said he, "though at the risk of losing me for ever! There was virtue in that, and perhaps she is not wholly irreclaimable. Perhaps, if I treat her with lenity, I shall *shame* her into reformation; and her generous nature, for generous it certainly is, will be piqued into a requital of my kindness by abstaining from evil in future."

It was Percy's *own* generous nature that spoke; and having resolved to listen to it, he went to bed, and to sleep. At eight he awoke, resolved to go in pursuit of his wife; for, though she told the driver in hearing of the servants to go to such a place, he had no doubt but she was gone to Lady Anne; and by nine o'clock the next day he was on the road to Green Rock, and in a post-chaise by himself, that the servants might know nothing of what had passed; and he took care to inform them before he dismissed them the preceding evening, that he had found a letter from Lady Jane informing him that she should not return for a day or two.

When he reached the inn where Lady Jane had been forced to stop, he got out while they were changing horses, and he saw a female resembling Ellis going up stairs with a phial in her hand. He immediately followed, and overtaking her, received the painful intelligence that her lady was in one of the chambers in an alarming state of indisposition brought on by wretchedness of mind. In an instant away fled all his projected reproaches, all idea of meeting her coldly, and all the angry dignity of an offended husband, which he had resolved to assume when they met. Jane, his adored Jane, ill, perhaps dying, at an obscure inn on the road, was the image uppermost in his mind, and he insisted on following Ellis to the bedside of the invalid. He did so; and Ellis had scarcely said "My lady! here 's my master!" when Lady Jane felt herself in the arms of her husband, and his tears trickling on her neck.

"This is too much; too much goodness, too much happiness!" she exclaimed. It was indeed! happiness beyond what her merits deserved, and beyond what it was *now* in her power to enjoy. "I will make no promises of amendment," cried she mournfully to Percy, "I *dare* not, for I distrust myself."

"I hail what you have now said," replied Percy, "as a better omen of amendment than fifty promises would have been; and from this moment, my beloved, only remember the past sufficiently to warn you against the temptations of the future!"

Lady Jane blessed him for his goodness, and tried to be cheerful; but her body as well as her mind was suffering; and the medical attendant whom the alarmed Ellis had called in, assured Percy, that if the lady were to travel immediately he could not answer for the consequences. In three days' time, however, she was able to be removed, and Percy

proposed, that instead of returning to town they should proceed to Green Rock and surprise Lady Anne. Accordingly, Ellis was sent to London by a coach that passed the inn door, and Lady Jane and Percy were to go on in a post-chaise to the next stage, there to remain till Ellis returned with Lionel in their own travelling carriage. In two days' time they reached Green Rock, not without Lady Jane's having experienced excessive alarm from the badness of the roads. But the welcome which they received from Lady Anne, and the sight of her child looking so healthy and so well, banished for a time, all painful sensations from Lady Jane's mind; and while she saw with rapture the joy expressed by the twins at meeting, and the pleasure Harry took in showing Lionel all his new toys, new books, and pretty garden, Lady Jane felt that dissipation and all its gaieties had nothing to give equal to the pure pleasure she at that moment experienced, and she believed herself capable of living in future for the enjoyments of the affections alone. But other thoughts, of a far less pleasant nature, soon obtruded themselves on her mind; and though she had had so recent a proof of the fondness which Percy felt towards her, still she could not contemplate the now brilliant beauty of Lady Anne, which formed a complete contrast to her own sunk eyes, hollow cheeks, and artificial complexion, without feelings of jealousy and alarm; especially as Lady Anne never spoke without riveting Percy's attention on all that she uttered.

I have known envious and jealous women more than once express the jealousy they could not conceal, but in a way to render it unsuspected by superficial observers; for they have *seemed* to express it as a *joke*, though they themselves knew the feeling to be a sad *reality;* while the unsuspicious hearers considered as a piece of playful good humour, what was in fact of a very different description. Lady Jane, taught by the same consciousness, had the same way of venting it as those women had — and one day after dinner she began thus: "Pray, Mr. Percy, how old do you think Lady Anne was last birth-day? —I should think about seventeen by her look, should not *you?*"

"Thereabouts," replied Percy, gazing with admiration on Lady Anne, whose cheek, before glowing with perfect health, now bloomed with the blush of modesty.

"I protest I will not stay here — for I look so old and so ugly by you, Lady Anne, that I can't bear the sight of myself. Besides, if I do stay, I shall hate you cordially; for it is quite out of the question, you know, Mrs. Tyrawley, for a faded fashionable belle to bear the sight of a young beauty like Lady Anne, quite in her prime!"

"Your ladyship is joking," replied Mrs. Tyrawley; "for I think, if I recollect right, that you are a year younger than Lady Anne?"

"Ay, according to age,—but what am I in look, in health, and even in feelings? I am sure Lady Anne might say with more propriety than Monsieur de Coulanges did when he writes to Madame de Sevigne, 'qu'à coup sûr on a commis quelque grosse erreur de date dans son acte de baptême."

"Jane, Jane, be quiet," cried Percy, smiling, "you make Lady Anne blush."

"Hold your tongue, foolish man! I know what I am saying; and do you really believe in your silly heart, that Anne is not woman enough to be pleased with being complimented on her good looks?"

"No; a *few* compliments on her looks may be pleasing to any woman, even to a Lady Anne Mortimer; and so are a few gentle coaxings on the back to a cat; but if long continued they become painful and irritating, and so is prolonged flattery to a modest woman."

"There, Percy! who has made Lady Anne blush *now?* and O, how I triumph! I have effected my wishes: for, by dint of blushing, as I have often seen happen to her before, her colour is become purple and coarse, and I should not now be ashamed to show my genteeler face by the side of hers. Trust me, I know how to destroy a rival beauty. And now, Anne, that you are no longer so intolerably handsome, I feel friendly towards you again, and will not go away till *to-morrow.*"

Mrs. Tyrawley and her daughter, and even Percy, thought all this was mere *badinage;* but it was a real transcript of her feelings, and the flushed cheek and therefore diminished beauty of Lady Anne, imparted to her in truth the pleasure which she expressed.

The next day, and the next, and the next to that, were days of variety, and therefore of pleasure to Lady Jane. But when she had heard all Miss Tyrawley had seen abroad, and Mrs. Tyrawley at home; had witnessed the wonderful improvement in reading of the little Harry, and seen, not without much pain, that Lionel was a dunce to him; had been waited upon by all the neighbours; had become acquainted with all the drives and all the walks; she sighed to return to London, and was very glad to hear Percy say that he must return to his parliamentary duties; and the next day witnessed the preparations for their departure.

While Lady Jane and Lady Anne were sitting alone together in the drawing-room, and the twins were playing beside them, Lady Jane catching Harry in her arms, and violently kissing him, said, "Come, dear boy, get on your hat and coat, for you shall go back to London with us and Lionel."

"That I won't," said the boy, struggling to get away from her.

"Oh yes! you shall—To be sure you love me, Harry?"

"Yes, I love you, but not so well as mamma Anne."

"No! Still, when I tell you I wish you to come and live with me again, to be sure you will?"

"No; I tell you I won't!" cried the boy.

"Ay! but you must," said Lady Jane; "you must go with your poor own pretty mamma Jane, as you used to call me."

"But you are not pretty mamma now,—you are old, ugly, painted mamma!"

"You little unnatural being!" cried Lady Jane, irritated beyond measure. "So, Lady Anne," she added, turning on her a look of suspicion and reproach, "you have not, I find, with all your fine schooling, taught the boy the commandment to honour his mother! And I know not how such a child should understand what being painted is; but I comprehend still less how he should have thought of applying it as a term of reproach, if he had not been taught by some one older and wiser than himself."

"Meaning me?" haughtily demanded Lady Anne.

"If the cap fits your ladyship, you may put it on." Anger, the great leveller, making even *a woman of quality vulgar*.

"Then now, Lady Jane, hear my fixed resolution," replied Lady Anne: "Your various errors I could pity and forgive; I thought you weak, not vicious; and I trusted that time, kindness, and lenity might reform you; but now that you have displayed such malignity of nature as to accuse me, your earliest friend, of an act of *baseness*, of trying to lower a mother in the opinion of her child,—an action which you know me to be incapable of,—I never will hold communion with you more. My religion teaches me to forgive you; but I feel that the woman who was capable of uttering the malignant charge you have *now* uttered is unworthy any longer to be my friend and associate." So saying, she walked out of the room; while the little Percy clung to her, crying "Take me with you, take me with you, *good* mamma Anne," and by that means increased the pangs of the already repentant Lady Jane, whose reflections were certainly of a most unpleasant nature.

"Where is Lady Anne?" said Percy, entering ready equipped for his journey; "the carriage is ready."

"She is gone, I believe, to her own room," replied Lady Jane, bursting into tears, "and I, I fear, have seen her for the last time."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, you know she is sometimes rather captious, and she is so offended at something I said very innocently, that she has renounced me for ever."

"But," exclaimed Percy, after a pause of indignant surprise, "you must have been very much to blame, or Lady Anne could not have formed so violent a resolution."

"Yes—I knew you would take her part," said Lady Jane provokingly. "However, I wish you would ring, and send your compliments to her, and beg to be allowed to take leave of her."

Percy did so. Lady Anne immediately sent word, that she should be glad to see Mr. Percy in her dressing-room—and he obeyed the summons. He found Lady Anne pale and agitated; but, in reply to Percy's earnest wish to know from her the cause of the quarrel, she said, "I would not repeat Lady Jane's words to you on any account; suffice, that I never will voluntarily hold intercourse with any one that believes me, even for an instant, capable of a base action."

"And who *can*, who *does*, or who ever *did* believe you capable of such a thing?"

"Lady Jane, sir; and any thing else I could have pitied and forgotten."

"Amazement!" exclaimed Percy, "but if you will not explain, she shall;" and rushing down stairs, he ran in search of her. But Lady Jane, afraid of seeing him alone after his interview with Lady Anne, had left the drawing-room, and was sitting with Mrs. Tyrawley and her daughter in the breakfast-parlour. Thither Percy followed her, and, entering with a very agitated air, desired to see her alone.

"No, thank ye," cried Lady Jane, forcing a laugh, "I had rather stay where I am; for I know you are going to be very fierce, and the presence of these ladies may keep you a little in order."

"No trifling, madam; I have seen Lady Anne——"

"Who never trifles, certainly!—Well, Mr. Percy, and I suppose her grim ladyship told tales of me, and you believe them, as you deem her infallible?"

"I wish I could think the same of your ladyship," replied Percy sarcastically; "but as I wish not to pain your feelings unnecessarily by talking on a certain subject before these ladies, I must *insist* on leading you to another room." And Lady Jane no longer dared to refuse compliance.

"Lady Jane," said Percy, "I cannot, will not leave this house till I have seen you reconciled to the mistress of it, to whom we both owe so much, even though your pride be forced to undergo the misery of concessions."

"What, sir! I flattered myself you were too proud for your wife, to bear to think of her making concessions to any one?"

"I must be proud *of* my wife before I can be proud *for* her, madam, and I am at this moment thoroughly ashamed of her."

"Has Lady Anne then told you all?"

"She has told me nothing;—but my knowledge of her makes me think her likely to be right as far as passion can ever *be* right, for you say that she was *violent*."

"And you *believe* me. Well, that is a great

deal. However, I cannot tell a falsehood, and would rather, at any time, own myself in the wrong, than not do justice to another; therefore I *own* that *I* only was to blame; and that, however severe Lady Anne was, I deserved all and every thing she said or intended."

"Strange, inconsistent, faulty yet fascinating being!" cried Percy, disarmed by this frank confession; "whenever I feel inclined to throw you from me with one hand, I long at the same time to clasp you with the other."

"Thank you! thank you!" cried Lady Jane, "you are only too good to me; but go to Lady Anne, and try to mollify her."

Percy did go, but Lady Anne was inexorable.—"I pity and forgive her," she replied, "but I cannot associate with her;" and Percy, distressed beyond measure, returned to Lady Jane.

"I cannot live without her entire forgiveness," said she, "I can't *indeed*, Percy. To be renounced by my friend, my preserver, my benefactress, will kill me!—But I will make one effort to affect her; and if that fail, I fear that even your love will not support me as it ought." Lady Jane immediately wrote a few lines, and giving them to Percy, he went to deliver them in person to Lady Anne. Lady Anne took the note, and turned very pale while she read it. Immediately after, without one word of objection, and in a faltering voice, she said, "I will attend you to Lady Jane immediately." Then, as soon as she saw her, she advanced towards her with open arms, and, faintly articulating, "I forgive you," she mingled her tears with those of Lady Jane.

Lady Jane's note was as follows:

"You know my situation—and the delicate state of my health;—therefore, it is not very improbable that you may never see me more, even should your relenting heart prompt you to wish to see me, and to forgive the injustice towards you of which I bitterly repent.—Ask then your own heart, Lady Anne, whether, should I die of my confinement, you would not exclaim, with intolerable and eternal bitterness of remorse,—'Oh, my beloved Jane! would, would that I had forgiven thee!'"

Lady Jane well knew the heart to which she appealed, and she did not, could not appeal in vain.

When all the adieus were over, and Lady Jane and Percy seated in the carriage, "now, Jane," said he, "do give me some little hint what the quarrel was about."

"Why—to be serious, I think I had some right to be provoked; though not with Anne,—and it was all owing to Harry. For, would you believe it? when I, in joke, was teasing him to go home with me, stating myself what he used to call me, his 'poor own dear pretty mamma Jane,' the little wretch replied in great rage, 'No,—I won't. You are not my pretty mamma, *now*,—you are my old, ugly, *painted* mamma.'"

"That was provoking, indeed."

"Ay,—was it not? And can you wonder that I wished to whip our little *hope* into an utter despair?"

"Upon my word, I should have been inclined to whip him, too, if I had heard him. But what had this to do with Lady Anne?'"

"Oh! I chose to accuse her of not teaching the urchin to honour his mother, and hinted a suspicion, partly in fun, and partly in earnest, that some one must have *taught* the boy that I was painted! and *so* Anne thought I meant her."

"And did you not mean her?"

"Something very like it, I own; but then I was in a *passion*, you know!"

"Well—well—let us say no more on the subject," said Percy. "I see yours is but a bad case; so I am very glad that a juror was withdrawn, and that the matter goes no further."

Though Lady Jane arrived in town in perfect health, the agitation of mind which she had undergone, and the alarm she had experienced from the badness of the roads, had a pernicious effect on her frame, and a premature confinement was the consequence soon after she was again settled in London, during which she had the satisfaction to see, by Percy's affectionate attention, that though she had *deserved* to lose his heart, that heart was still fondly devoted to her. There are men, I believe, in whom the habit of constancy, and of undeviating attachment, is as strong and unconquerable as in virtuous women; and ill befall that wife who, though conscious of her happiness in possessing the faithful tenderness of a devoted husband, can dare to abuse the power which she possesses, and to tyrannize, because she may do so with impunity, over the heart that loves her even with all her faults!

Whatever change dissipation, secret anxiety, and late hours, might have made in Lady Jane's person, there was no alteration in her manners; they, and even her countenance at times, possessed all that abundance of charm which had, in her earlier hours, so fascinated Percy; and so powerful had been their united influence on Mrs. Tyrawley and her daughter, that Lady Jane gained more on their affections in a few days, than Lady Anne had done in several months;—nay, so strong were their prepossessions in favour of Lady Jane, that they had no doubt, but that, in the late quarrel, Lady Anne's proud, unyielding spirit was alone to blame; and they were quite shocked at Mr. Percy's forcing his wife to make concessions to her, which they had *no doubt* he had done. "For my part," observed Mrs. Tyrawley, "I should have been very jealous of the woman to whom my Mr. Tyrawley should have forced *me* to humble myself. Indeed *I*

would *not* have done it. And if Lady Jane had asked me *my* advice, I should have told her *my mind*. Men are entirely what we make them; and, like spaniels, the more they are ill-treated, the fonder they grow. Remember *that*, Mary, and never give up an inch of your prerogative when you are a wife. I am sure Lady Anne herself would not do so, though she was the means of her cousin's doing it."

Thus hasty in judging, and consequently thus erroneous in judgment, are nine hundred and ninety persons out of a thousand, who take upon themselves to pass sentence on the actions and sentiments of others! I have heard of an old gentleman, a humorist, who, living in a large city, and having appropriated one room in his house to parties who assembled there for the purposes of rational conversation, had different texts of Scripture of a prohibitory nature, in black and gold letters, on different sides of the walls;—such as, "Keep thy tongue from evil speaking!" "Judge not, lest ye be judged! for with the measure ye mete it shall be meted to you again;" and many others of the same kind. If any one regardless of these golden rules ventured to tell a tale of gossip, and talk of persons instead of things,—he used to point to these warning letters; and if that was not sufficient, he used to take up a book of history; and presenting it to the offender, it was his custom to say, "I shall be very happy to hear any little anecdote about my friend Hannibal or Scipio, which may have escaped the notice of historians, but you must excuse my listening to *modern biography*. When I read or hear any thing *fabulous*, I can forgive its *lies* only in favour of its *antiquity*."—If this hint was not taken, he was careful never to admit the offending person again. And indeed such exclusion was not often necessary; for those whose powers of animation could only be awakened by dirty gossip, alias news, and the wagging of the tongue of detraction, found his parties as dull to *them*, as they themselves were odious to *him*; and in a short time after these parties were instituted, and these rules adhered to, those who composed them might be said to breathe an air untainted by the pernicious hydrogen of slander.

But to return to Lady Anne, who had not as yet learnt how injurious to the cause of virtue are manners which repel, and that even truth itself must wear a becoming dress, in order to make her welcome;—One evening the little Harry, who had been to spend the day with some boys rather older than himself, at a gentleman's house in the village, came home crying and his temples bleeding profusely.

"Be not alarmed, my lady," said the footman, who had been sent to fetch him, "master Percy and another young gentleman quarrelled, and master Percy was knocked down; and so, my lady, in falling he struck his head against something and set his temple bleeding, my lady."

"But I am afraid he is hurt," cried Lady Anne, "as he cries so bitterly. Come with me, my dearest boy, and let me know every thing." Accordingly she took him to her own apartment; and as soon as he could speak intelligibly, the child said, "I don't cry because I am hurt, but because Master Apreece said I was no gentleman, and he would never play with me again! Now an't I a gentleman, mamma Anne, and ought he not to play with me again?"

Lady Anne could not help smiling at this serious appeal from a gentleman of seven years old; but with great gravity she answered, that it was not birth alone that made the gentleman, that good behaviour was necessary, and she must beg to know what he had done, before she could decide whether Master Apreece was right or not.

"Nay, I am sure, mamma Anne, *I* did no harm; for I only spoke as I have often heard you speak."

"Indeed! and how was that?"

"Oh! Master Apreece said something which I did not think true, so I said, 'That it is not, I know; and so let's have none of that, if you please, for you don't speak truth;' and so he knocked me down."

"I do not wonder at it, my dear, as you accused him of being a liar; but when did you ever hear *me* speak thus?"

"Oh! I have often heard you say, 'That's not true, I am sure, and I wonder you can repeat such vile stories;' and it was only last week, that when Miss Jones and her mother and aunt were here, you interrupted Miss Jones in a story she was telling, with,—'Say no more, Miss Jones—say no more, I will not hear you; I am sure the story you are telling is false, and I wonder any one dare repeat such things; for my part, I hate gossips, or gossippers;' and I am sure, mamma Anne, I wonder Miss Jones did not knock you down. But she certainly looked as if she had a great mind to do it; and if she had been Master Apreece, she would have done it—though I am sure, with all the pains I took, I know I did not look and speak like *you*."

"Pains! did you take pains to look and speak like me?"

"O yes! for papa told me that the more I was like you, the better he would love me." And Lady Anne could not resist kissing his poor wounded temple. "Well, Harry! I plead guilty to this rudeness to Miss Jones, for *rudeness* it was, and I must learn to improve for your sake, as you are such a shrewd observer and close imitator of my actions."

"*Rudeness!*" asked the child. "Ay, they said they supposed that I learnt such manners from *you*; 'for,' said Master Apreece, 'your mamma Anne, as you call her, does not mind

what she says, and every one thinks she is a disagreeable woman.' And I was so angry at his speaking thus of you, that I tried to knock him down; but his brother held me back; however, I did give him a pretty good kick on the shins."

Lady Anne was too just to punish a child for a fault of which she had been the cause, and too wise not to profit by the severe lesson which she had learnt. She also saw that she could more easily amend him by example than by precept; and what all the raillery and advice of Lady Jane had failed to effect, was brought about by the artless eloquence of her affectionate son.

"Yes," said Lady Anne to herself, "I will at last, for this dear child's sake, condescend, as Percy once said, to be agreeable. I will dismiss my advanced guard of *brusqueries*, which used to frighten many from approaching me. But hard indeed will the task be, and no motive less powerful than mine could enable me to succeed in it; still, it is not *impossible* to reform one's manners. Moral habits, however wrong, cannot, I believe, be altered at my time of life, any more than a defect of form or face; but manners may be improved and changed, as certainly, though not so easily, as one's dress; and I must own that winning manners are to the virtues, what a becoming habit is to the person; therefore, it is the duty of those who wish to promote the influence of virtue, to make her appear in as attractive a form as possible."

The next morning, Mrs. Tyrawley, after praising Lady Jane, ventured to hint that, by her appearance at times, she feared she was not happy, and from what she saw she doubted that Mr. Percy was not a kind husband. If Mrs. Tyrawley had said this only the preceding day, Lady Anne would have thundered upon her with, "I wonder you dare, madam, presume to calumniate a most worthy man, of whom you can know nothing,"—or words to that effect, accompanied by looks and tones of the most indignant contempt. But now, according to her late resolution, Lady Anne checked the rising storm, and forced herself on principle to swallow down two large draughts of cold water which stood near her, before she replied. At length she said very gently, "The error which you have fallen into relative to Mr. Percy is one, my dear Mrs. Tyrawley, which your own penetration will soon convince you *is* an error, whenever you have an opportunity of seeing more of that gentleman."

"To be sure," said Mrs. Tyrawley, pleased at the implied compliment, "one ought not to be too hasty in judging."

"A wise and virtuous remark," resumed Lady Anne. "I will not affront your sagacity, nor violate truth so much as to say my poor cousin is quite happy. She has, I see, fears concerning the event of her confinement, which would alone, you know, be sufficient to cast a shade over her countenance."

"Certainly, certainly," replied Mrs. Tyrawley, thinking she never saw Lady Anne so agreeable before.

"And I assure you, my dear Mrs. Tyrawley," she added, "I say it to you as a friend, Lady Jane gave me such an instance of her husband's recent kindness to her, as affected me even to tears."

"Really! Well—to see how one may be deceived!"

"Pray," asked Miss Tyrawley with a very wise look, "is it true that Lady Jane had lost a great deal of money at play?"

Lady Anne could hardly command herself at this coarse and direct question, and she had recourse to the water-bottle again.

"Lady Jane has played certainly," observed Lady Anne at last, "but, my dear Miss Tyrawley, you know too much of the world to place any confidence in newspaper reports and gossip stories; therefore I am sure your candour will lead you not only to disbelieve that Lady Jane's losses are very great, but also to contradict such assertions yourself whenever you hear them. Contradiction of such reports from a woman like you, must always have weight with rational good people."

"I am very glad to hear your ladyship say this," replied the flattered Miss Tyrawley, "and I will take care to contradict the report whenever I hear it."

Soon after Harry came in, accompanied by a prosing old servant, who wanted to speak to his lady on business,—a man who usually tired out Lady Anne's patience very soon; and the poor man, conscious of this, was always slower with Lady Anne, from fear, than he was with any one else. This day he was perhaps slower than ever; and Lady Anne could scarcely refrain from saying, as usual, "really, Hibbert, you are so tiresome I can't bear it," and was inclined to give vent to even more *alarming* expressions of weariness.

"I see, my lady, I see, as usual, I tire your heart out," said the poor old man, "and you are quite impatient."

"You mistake, Hibbert," replied Lady Anne gently, "I am *not* impatient; that is, I mean that I will try never to be impatient again; for it is a very bad custom, and I mean to improve—for you know, Hibbert, I am not yet too old to learn."

"Too *old!* God bless your ladyship! No—that you are not, and I never seed you look younger or more beautifuller in your life, my lady! I hope no offence."

"None at all, good Hibbert, but go on; and don't fancy that you weary me." And the old man proceeded. But it required all Lady Anne's firmness of character to enable her to keep her resolution of not expressing her impatience; and at length the little Harry exclaimed with a laugh, "Dear me, Hibbert,

have you not done yet? I am sure my mamma Anne is completely tired, and she has pleasanter things to do than to sit here listening to your tiresome speeches."

"Your mamma Anne, sir, is of a different opinion," replied Lady Anne, "and feels it her duty to listen with respectful attention to a worthy old servant, who has always done his duty by her and her family. I must therefore desire you, Master Percy, to leave the room, for having made that fine speech; and when I have finished talking to Hibbert, I have something serious to say to *you*." The child, accustomed to obey, left the room, though in high displeasure; and at last, much to Lady Anne's joy, Hibbert ended and departed.

"Well! Lady Anne, I am sure I wonder at your patience," said Miss Tyrawley.

"You wonder, I presume, at its *novelty*, rather than its *extent*," replied Lady Anne smiling, and going in search of Harry, whom she soon appeased by telling him her own resolution to amend her manners, and curb her impatience in order to set him a good example; and she contrived to stimulate his pride and ambition in a virtuous direction, by begging him to set her a good example in return. When Lady Anne retired for the night, she began on principle to recall the occurrences of the day, and to ask her own heart, whether, by substituting gentleness for roughness, and forbearance for impatience, she had at all violated truth and sincerity; and her heart entirely acquitted her. "But suppose," said Lady Anne, "instead of trying to set Mrs. Tyrawley right concerning Percy, and her daughter right concerning Lady Jane, I had replied by indignant violence, as I usually do — the consequence would have been, that pique would have made them tenacious of their opinion and I should have injured those whom I wish to serve. Ay, —let me in future ever bear in mind the fable of the wind and the sun! and I will make Harry get it by heart immediately."

The next week the Jones's were coming to dine with her; though Miss Jones, resenting Lady Anne's rudeness, could with difficulty be prevailed upon by her father and mother to venture near her again. To this family Lady Anne now resolved to add the Apreeces, who, concluding that Harry had told his aunt all their son had done and had said, expected never to be invited again. It was therefore an agreeable surprise to them to receive an invitation written in Lady Anne's own hand, and begging them to bring their children with them—as she meant to let Harry have a party as well as herself. Accordingly, on the day appointed, the little Jones's (grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. Jones,) and the Apreeces with their family, arrived at Green Rock. Miss Jones kept aloof from Lady Anne, and looked cold and proud; but Lady Anne's unwonted courtesy at length a little mollified her, and though the Apreeces, particularly Charles, the offender, looked awkward and conscious at first, Lady Anne seemed so gracious and good humoured, that they flattered themselves she was ignorant of what had passed.

It was not long before Lady Anne took an opportunity, in Harry's hearing, to say to Miss Jones, "My conscience smites me on your account, and tells me I was rude to you when you last favoured me with your company."

"Rude! my lady!" said Miss Jones, blushing, confused, and with too little firmness of character to dare to say "Yes."

"Your kindness may have led you," continued Lady Anne, "to excuse and forget it; but I am sure that I contradicted you very roughly, and said something about gossips and gossippers which nothing could excuse. I therefore now, my dear Miss Jones, tender my most sincere apologies to you, and trust to your indulgence for receiving them graciously."

Miss Jones did so, and was indeed so gratified by this condescension from the proud Lady Anne, that she wondered how she could ever have been so weak as not to like her.—This lesson and this example were not lost on the little Harry; for Lady Anne saw him soon after go up to Charles Apreece, and heard him say, that *knowing* he had been very rude to him, and deserved the blow which he had given him, he begged his pardon for what he had *said*; though he could not for what he had done, when he spoke so rudely of his dear mamma Anne.—Charles Apreece, being old enough to feel awkward at this address, as he was sure it was overheard, shook the little Harry by the hand, and said, "I must forget and forgive;"—and Harry took him to look at his rabbits.

Lady Anne the whole day made a point of showing marked attention to Charles Apreece, and in the course of the evening she took him by the hand, telling him she wanted to speak with him alone; while the terrified boy, having no doubt but that she was going to take him seriously to task for what he had said of her, would have refused to accompany her, if he had not thought he ought to be too much of a man to be afraid of a woman. When they had reached another room, Lady Anne said, "You have given Harry and me too a lesson, my good boy, for which we shall, I trust, be the better as long as we live. To give any one the lie, and speak coarsely and rudely, is a sort of *vice*; and I thank you for the blow you gave Harry, and also for what you said of *me*, as it made me look into myself, and I hope to be more agreeable in future. I wish therefore to give you a token of my gratitude, and I have netted this little purse for you, which I hope you will do me the favour to accept."—The poor surprised, sheepish boy could neither look up nor speak, and he took his purse with scarcely a bow of thanks.—"Now," said

Lady Anne, "it is my turn to give *you* a lesson; you were very wrong in speaking disrespectfully of me to my adopted child; it was a fault which, though anger might occasion, it could not excuse; and though he was wrong in kicking you out of revenge, yet his feeling of resentment was an honourable feeling. I know he has made his apologies to you for his trespass against *you*; and if you are the generous boy which I am disposed to think you, you will ask him to excuse yours against *him*." Charles Apreece found it easier to look Lady Anne in the face when she reproved, than when she thanked him; and when she ceased, he ventured to say, "I beg your pardon, and I will beg Harry's."

"There's a good boy," said Lady Anne; "and now, if you please, you and I will begin our little ball together; for I have ordered the harpers into the hall, and we will have a dance."

On which Lady Anne, leaning on her young partner, entered the hall where the company was already assembled; and the delighted parents saw Lady Anne put herself at the head of the set with Charles, while Mrs. Tyrawley and Mrs. Jones were the only persons of the party who did not join the dance.

"I cannot think," said Miss Tyrawley to her mother in a whisper, "what has effected such a change in Lady Anne. To think of her dancing, and with that boy who knocked Harry down!" But Lady Anne never danced except with children; and now, meaning to pay Charles Apreece a particular compliment, she sat down, and danced no more, as soon as she had danced two dances with him; and Charles, as soon as he quitted her, went up to Harry, and begged his pardon for having spoken ill of Lady Anne;—a pardon which the happy and generous little boy immediately granted.

Oh! what a revolution in every one's sentiments had now taken place respecting Lady Anne! Her beauty had always been unquestioned; but now her courteous manners, her grace, her countenance, were equally praised; and Mrs. Tyrawley was seduced, by the unusual suavity of her manner, to accost her once by the title of dear cousin! Lady Anne felt, forcibly felt, the alteration of feeling towards her which this appellation implied; and turning towards her with one of Lady Jane's smiles, she said, "Thank you, dear madam. I was afraid, till now, that you did not choose to own me for a cousin, as you never favoured me by calling me so;"—while tears started into Mrs. Tyrawley's eye, for shame at having so long mistaken Lady Anne's character.

"Lady Anne," said she, "or my dear cousin, you are one of the few persons who ought to have a window in their heart."

"I understand you," said Lady Anne, smiling, "but I trust that it will in future be unnecessary; for I mean to have an inscription on the outside—to show what there is *within*."

The next week they were agreeably surprised by a visit from Percy and Lionel; and as Lady Jane was tolerably well, Percy took advantage of the Christmas recess to steal down to Green Rock for a few days. He gazed with all a father's pride at the beauty and healthy appearance of Harry, and with a father's anxious tenderness on the contrast between him and his brother. Nor was he slow to perceive that their minds were as different as their persons; and he found that, though Lady Jane was quite as sensible and as well-informed a woman as Lady Anne, her want of regularity in her mode of teaching, had prevented the child's profiting as much as he ought by the instructions he received from a private tutor; and but for the fear of hurting Lady Jane's feelings, he would have left Lionel under Lady Anne's care. But the little Lionel had a longer opportunity of sharing in Harry's education than Percy expected; for a deep snow fell in one night, and continued so long as to render the roads impassable with safety; and the terrified Lady Jane, losing in fear for the safety of her husband and child, all dread of Lady Anne's increasing influence, wrote to desire he would *on no account* think of returning till the roads were quite safe.

Could Lady Anne have thought it right to rejoice at this detention, she would have rejoiced; but, accustomed to struggle with and to conquer every feeling that militated against her sense of right, she tried to regret the necessity which made Percy her inmate for so long a time, and determined to see as little of him as possible. Percy was not long before he perceived the change in Lady Anne's manner, and also in his little boy's. One day he was joking with Harry; and the child not understanding that he spoke ironically, forgot himself so far as to exclaim in his former rude way, "That it is not, though—and you don't speak truth."

"Harry," cried Lady Anne; and the conscious child added, with many blushes, "I am sorry to contradict you, papa, but I think you are wrong." And while Percy hugged the little boy to his heart, he said, "" How is this, Lady Anne? There are great changes and improvements here."

Lady Anne smiled, and said, "Harry, shall you and I tell papa what brought this improvement in our manner?"

"O dear! yes; tell papa all about it," said the delighted child; and Percy listened with the most interested attention. But when Lady Anne had ended, he felt a degree of embarrassment he could not account for, and an utter inability to express to her half of what he felt on her candid avowal of her fault, and her resolution to amend it for the sake of her charge. Besides, he recollected how often he had said Lady Anne's *brusquerie* was her

only defect; and he beheld her before him, as handsome and excellent as ever, without this only barrier between her and the power of being irresistible.

"You are an admirable creature," he at last articulated;—"and I shall bless the day when my child became the child of your adoption." Then with a deep sigh he quitted the room—while Lady Anne allowed herself to dwell neither on the sigh nor the words.

The fortnight of enforced confinement flew too rapidly for Percy and Lionel; and so did it for the ladies. The Tyrawleys lost all prejudice *against* Percy, and imbibed a strong one *for* him;—and while Mrs. Tyrawley spun, Miss Tyrawley worked muslin, and Lady Anne coloured maps for Harry, Percy read aloud to them; and the hours which he did not pass in the House of Commons, now for the first time of many years were passed in rational amusement combined with daily instruction.

"O that my own home were like this!" he exclaimed to himself. "It might have been! and why, O why is it not?" But at length the parting hour arrived; and Percy, with a full heart, departed with his weeping child for that home so different to the one that he had left.

About six weeks after their departure, Lady Anne's peace was interrupted by a letter from Lady Jane, urging her, if she had any regard for the peace and honour of Percy, and any wish to save her from addresses which might end at least in the loss of reputation, to pay to Lord Lorimer several thousand pounds which she had lost to him at play! he having offered to give up the debt, if she would allow him to prosecute his suit to her as a lover; and stating that, though she loathed the proposal, yet dread of confessing her fault to Percy prevailed on her to accede to it for a time.

Lady Anne sat for some minutes in speechless, motionless horror, after she had received this letter. Whatever her errors might be, she had always considered Lady Jane's virtue as impregnable; but now her confidence in that was destroyed; as she had proved that the dread of incurring her husband's displeasure was more powerful over her, than that of exposing herself to the risk of dishonouring him. But Lady Anne was wrong. Lady Jane well knew she was in no danger by consenting to receive Lord Lorimer's addresses, because she was certain that Lady Anne would, when informed of what she had done, immediately hasten to her relief. But at first Lady Anne started wildly from her seat, as she could not devise immediate means of doing this. But she recollected that money had been offered for one of her estates very recently. "Yes, I will sell it," cried she; "far better will it be for the child to possess one estate less, than to lose a dearer possession, the consciousness of his mother's unblemished honour and reputation!"

In a few hours every thing was arranged for Lady Anne's departure for town; and telling her friends that indispensable business summoned her away, she consigned the weeping Percy to their care, while with a beating heart she proceeded on her journey, attended by an old steward of her father's. She drove immediately on her arrival to her bankers'; and putting into their hands the writings of an estate for which she had been offered 20,000*l.* she requested of them the immediate loan of the sum she wanted; and having received it, she returned to the carriage in which she had left her steward, and telling him she had business with Lord Lorimer, she drove to his house. Lady Anne, though conscious of her own unsullied purity, and spotless character, had too wise a regard to decorum, and the established usages of society, to call alone on Lord Lorimer, even though an business of such serious importance; therefore, when the servant said his master was at home, she insisted that her steward, Mr. Moreton, should get out with her. Lord Lorimer was at home, reading, and in his dressing-gown, when his gentleman entered, and said a lady wished to speak to him.

"A lady! what lady? Is she young and handsome?"

"Young and beautiful as an angel, my lord."

"Bravo! show her into the little parlour!" "My lord, I have shown her into the drawing-room." — "Blockhead! is she proper drawing-room company, think you?"—"Yes, my lord! I should think her, by her look and manner, fit for a palace; and that she was a queen. She is not, I assure you, my lord, like any ladies that ever call on your lordship."

"Bravo! another Jane de Montfort! I protest this beauty has made the fellow eloquent! Well; now to judge for myself."

"Stay! stay, my lord! pray put on your coat; I am sure the lady is a lady, my lord!" However, Lord Lorimer proceeded as he was, having first looked into the glass to ascertain whether he was "*in face*;" and sauntering affectedly into the drawing-room, his astonished eye rested on the tall majestic figure and severe though beautiful features of Lady Anne Mortimer.

"This is an honour, madam," said he, "really so unaccountable," (though in his heart he suspected why she came,) "that I should not have thought of coming down to your ladyship in this dress. Pray excuse me while I change it." And glad of an excuse for retiring in order to recover himself, he went back to change his gown for his coat.

"You are right, Dawlish," said he to his man; "there is only one Lady Anne Mortimer in the world, and I might have known her by your description, could I have thought

her highmightiness would have deigned to call on such a sinner as myself." Then, having new-tied his neckcloth, and new-brushed his fine black crop, he returned to Lady Anne, who had relinquished none of her dignity, but with her arms folded in a long velvet mantle, and her head and face uncovered, stood motionless and grand, like Mr. Kemble in Coriolanus on the hearth of Tullus Hostilius.

"I beg you will do me the honour, madam, to be seated."

"No! I will not, my lord," replied Lady Anne, no longer the urbane, smiling mistress of Green Rock; but cold, haughty, and repellant as the Lady Anne of former days. "My business with you will soon be settled."

"I am sorry to hear it for *my* sake, as I should be most proud to detain your ladyship some time under my roof; honoured, indeed, by such a presence!"

"As I should not consider the honour as mutual, my lord, I cannot regret the unavoidable shortness of my stay. Allow me to go with you into the next room, and you, my good Moreton, stay here till I return." She then entered the next room through folding doors, which were open; therefore, though she spoke so low that Moreton could not hear, he saw her all the time.—"I come, my lord, as you may guess, by desire of Lady Jane Percy, to discharge the debt she owes you; and to assure you that Lady Jane has in me a friend and a relation, who would spend the last shilling of her fortune, sooner than allow her to owe for one instant a pecuniary obligation to Lord Lorimer, or any man." So saying, she laid down the money, and turned her dark eyes upon him with a look of such severe expression, while her full red lip projected still more with contemptuous indignation, that even Lord Lorimer was awed and abashed.

"Come, come, Lady Anne," said he, recovering himself; "unless Lady Jane really desired you to pay this money, I cannot take it."

"Sir! I expressly told you that I came by Lady Jane's desire; and, if I did not, you must know that when one woman confides to another a disgraceful secret, she makes that other the judge of her actions; and if I had not waited on you at the earnest request of Lady Jane, I should have come to have satisfied *myself*."

"But now, really, Lady Anne," replied Lord Lorimer, piqued into a wish to provoke her; "can you be such a novice as to suppose Lady Jane *wished* in her *heart* to get out of my debt?"

"My lord, can I, do you think, suppose my cousin, Lady Jane Percy, an abandoned woman?"

"Abandoned! No. But do you think it possible for a woman of her associations and habits of life, to be so *much* shocked at this little debt to me?—Remember, Lady Anne," taking her hand by force, "Scripture says, one cannot touch pitch without being defiled!"

"Pitch has touched me," replied Lady Anne, drawing away her hand with an action expressive of loathing, "and yet I trust I am not defiled."—Lord Lorimer immediately turned away, muttering a terrible oath.—"But, my lord," said Lady Anne, "I am losing time; here, as I said before, is your money!—And now, my lord, here ends the visit of Lady Anne Mortimer."—Then, with a polite but chilling curtsy, she beckoned Moreton, and not waiting to have her carriage called, tripped lightly down stairs before Lord Lorimer could even offer his hand. But he followed her to the door, and stood bowing there till she drove off.

"That is a woman, indeed!" said he to Dawlish, when he came to dress him. "Such a woman might tempt a man to marry, for she has a proper sense of her own value; and though Lucifer was humble, compared to her—her pride is that of conscious virtue and a character untainted!"

Lady Anne went from Lord Lorimer to Lady Jane; dreading the emotion which she knew they should both feel on meeting, and perplexed to know what excuse she should make to Percy for so sudden and unexpected a journey to town.—Yet, surely, business was a sufficient excuse; and it was only her consciousness that made the difficulty.—She found Lady Jane so unwell as to keep her bed the greatest part of the day; and Lady Anne was so shocked when she saw her faded looks that every other feeling was swallowed up in pity and apprehension.—As soon as Lady Jane heard Lady Anne announced, she screamed aloud with joy, and sprung up in her bed; but as soon as she saw her, she sunk down again and hid her face in the bed-clothes.

"Nay, Jane, look up! I came not to upbraid you;—I come as a friend, not a reprover." And Lady Jane received her in her arms.—"Well, Anne! my good angel! will you, will you save me?"

"No;—for you are already saved. I have this moment paid Lord Lorimer."

Lady Jane could not speak—and agitation soon forced her to lie down again. But such power had Lady Jane's mind over her body, that now her debt to Lord Lorimer was discharged, and Lady Anne had not reproached her, her health returned, and she was able to join Percy and Lady Anne at dinner in her own dressing-room.—Percy was delighted to see Lady Anne, but very sorry that she did not bring Harry with her.—"I will tell you what, Percy," said Lady Jane, "though I would not have sent for Lady Anne to be with me during my approaching confinement—now she is here, I cannot part with her again; and I am sure she cannot, will not, dare not refuse

to stay. Therefore, let Barnes come up directly with Harry, and our cousin Tyrawleys remain to take care of Green Rock."

Lady Anne did indeed not dare to refuse; for she well knew, if Lady Jane's confinement should be fatal, that she should not forgive herself for having denied her. Accordingly Barnes and Harry were sent for, and arrived in three days after in Piccadilly.

Thus then was Lady Anne obliged, though very reluctantly, to take up her residence once more in London. Still she could not but own to herself, that the society which Lady Jane assembled at her house at least two or three times in a week, for the purpose of conversation, was productive of the highest species of intellectual entertainment. Men of talents, whether of rank or otherwise, graced the parties of Lady Jane, and called forth in their elegant and lively hostess the colloquial excellence which peculiarly distinguished her; while Lady Anne, gratified in listening to those sallies in which she thought herself not qualified to join, sat in unmoved though intelligent silence; and while Lady Jane, light, splendid and changeable, sparkling like the drop-lustre that hung over her head, diffused around her an ever-varying radiance,—Lady Anne resembled more a tall and stately candelabre, diffusing a steady and unvaried light, and keeping one fixed though ever graceful position.

But the great ornament, the great charm of these intellectual evenings was Percy himself. The ready playfulness of his fancy; the graceful manner in which he narrated, and the mild yet convincing way in which he argued, made him at once the delight of his guests, and the pride and pleasure of his wife and of Lady Anne. But the latter suppressed, as if it were a criminal indulgence, the pleasure which she took in his conversation on these occasions, and suppressed it the more, because she suspected that Percy had a secret satisfaction in shining before *her*;—a suspicion which only too soon was excited also in the breast of Lady Jane. The latter was therefore very glad when, all remains of indisposition being vanished, she was able to mix generally in the world again, and to have an excuse for discontinuing those meetings at her own house, which could not fail to throw Percy more into the presence of Lady Anne than her jealous feelings could support with calmness. For it was indeed only too true that Percy felt his own home quite a new abode to *him*, since Lady Anne returned to it; and several times he caught himself calling her "Anne," as he used to do in his boyish days; but correcting himself, he said "Lady Anne" the next moment.—Still, he could not bear the formality of that title, and therefore substituted "My dear cousin" or "Coz," for both. And Lady Jane, having easily discovered the reason of this change of appellation, in the new feeling which Percy, unconsciously perhaps, indulged towards Lady Anne, became even more wretched than she had been before—Still she felt that she had deserved this misery; for was it not the contrast of her errors with Lady Anne's virtues, which had excited in the mind of Percy the feelings which distressed her? This conscious uneasiness had however power to make her reflect more than she had usually done; and in one of these reflecting humours the following dialogue took place between her and her cousin:—

"It is impossible, Anne," said she, "to account satisfactorily for the great difference which exists between you and me, though in our age and our rank in life we are so equal, and in blood so very near to each other; and this difference was, I know, discernible even in our childhood."

"It fills me with no wonder, Jane," replied Lady Anne, "for the varieties in character are as many as in faces. I once heard a great artist say, that no head or face had its duplicate, properly speaking, and I believe that the same thing may be said of every mind."

"But admitting that truth," replied Lady Jane, "and admitting also the former power of circumstances, how comes it that the same apparent circumstances operated so differently on you and on me?

"I, like you, was born a girl, when my parents wanted a boy to inherit the titles and entailed estates, and were naturally enough disappointed, as they had no other children, at the certainty that the said titles and estates would go to a cousin whom neither your parents nor mine cared for, and whom they scarcely knew."

"You should, however, add, Jane, that both you and I were as fondly beloved as if we had been of that sex which would have gratified their ambition as well as their love."

"True;—and that adds to the list of operating circumstances in which we resemble each other. But to go on—I was born an heiress, however, though not an heir, and my father's personal and my mother's entailed property were my ever destined portion; while your mother's immense possessions were to descend to you, and you therefore were always a predestinate *great* heiress. Yet, there never was a time when I was not extravagant and you prudent, though I was not born, and knew I was not, to above a sixth part of your fortune; and I always used to hear you called my *rich cousin!*—And I wonder how this could be—and—you smile?"

"Yes. I smile to see that you wonder, and imagine probably a remote cause for this difference in our daily habits, when a proximate and very obvious one would satisfactorily account for it."

"Well, explain."

"My dear Jane, our mothers and our fathers were as different in their habits as you

and I are; and I have always felt my affectionate pity for your errors increased by the consciousness that I owe probably to your mother's warning example, that system of education which has preserved me from those rocks which have wrecked you; my own conscious safety made me feel the more for your danger."

"Was my mother so notoriously extravagant?"

"Her sister, my beloved mother, thought her so; and though her fortune was not by any means equal to my mother's, who had been treated as an *elder son*, she always exceeded *her* in her expenses as much as you have exceeded *me;* and conscious that the different sort of education which they had received had occasioned this difference of character, as the Marchioness of D—— was brought up by a sensible well-principled aunt, and the Countess of L—— by a weak mother of great laxity of principle, my beloved parent, assisted by the strong intellect and rigid integrity of her husband, endeavoured to guard me by early habits of right conduct from the errors of her sister;—errors which would, she saw, become the portion of her sister's offspring."

"Well. But how did your parents, however able, guaranty you from the dangers to which I was exposed; namely, that of being told by servants, and governesses, that I was an heiress, and ought to have all I wished; and that money,—what was money to me? that I might eat gold if I liked."

"In the first place, I never had a governess, and my mother, as I was an only child, kept me *almost* always in her sight; therefore I was very little with servants; and ideas of the true duties and rights of heiresses were instilled into me too deeply by my parents, to make me in any danger of being misled by the false ideas which servants might attempt to give me. But our servants, from interested motives, and also from respect to their lord and lady, did what other dependants in similar circumstances would do, they chimed in with the plans of Lord and Lady D——; and I do not remember that any servant ever offered to tempt me to an action which *principle*, or *my parents* disowned. I use them as *synonymous terms*," added Lady Anne; with a glow of filial pride on her cheek, and a tear of filial regret in her eye; "for the dictates of my parents were, I well know, those only of reason and of virtue."

"I should like some of this chemical process of theirs, which produced pure gold, while *my* poor papa and mamma produced gold full of alloy; for I must say, Anne, I think I have some gold about me, and I believe I am as generous in a pecuniary point of view as you are."

"In every thing," replied Lady Anne modestly, "you would have been my equal, if not superior, doubt it not, if you had had my advantages."

"Well, thank ye, Lady Anne! it is so pleasant to be able to lay the burthen of one's sins on another's shoulders!"

"What! on those of a parent, Lady Jane? O fy!"

"Ay, very true. And I'll say O fy! also, if you will not look so..... But, dear Anne, I remember how my poor mother laughed, when she came home from a visit to yours in the country, and saw you looking so demure, and so contented in a shabby cloak and hat; and when she asked why you were allowed to wear a dress so unworthy a great heiress, the Marchioness answered, that it was because you had voluntarily offered to go without a new cloak and hat, that the money they would cost might be expended on a poor family which you had discovered in the neighbourhood—'What nonsense!' replied my mother, (Lady L——,) 'when you could afford to give Anne those new clothes, and money besides for the poor family!'—'I wish solemnly,' answered the Marchioness, 'to impress on my daughter's mind, that self-denial is the foundation of every virtue, and that on personal sacrifices is built the most acceptable benevolence to others.' 'And then,' added my mother, as she related this scene to my father, 'that solemn child Lady Anne looked round at me so self-satisfied, and so conceited, that I could have whipped the little urchin.'"

"And what effect had this maternal wisdom on you?" asked Lady Anne smiling.

"What it might have had, I do not know," said Lady Jane, "for my father replied, 'you had better stay at home and whip your own urchin, Hortensia; for I suspect she deserves it rather more than this good little Anne; for, if she *did* look conceited, it was the conceit of virtue.'—'But what right has a child to look, or be, conceited at all?'—'Ask your daughter Jane, ma'am, whenever you dress her in a new bonnet, and cry out, how lovely she looks! Come hither, my beautiful child, and kiss me.' My mother bit her lip, but did not reply; and the pleasure which I felt at hearing my mother laugh at you, of whom I was always jealous, was damped entirely by my father's defence of you; and I even learnt to think that *I* should like to earn what my father called the conceit of virtue."

"Your father, at least, seems to have had wise ideas as a parent?"

"Yes. But he was too volatile to think long and too indolent to act on his own wise precepts. The light he shed on my path was only that of lightning, bright and transient, and more formed by its sudden flash, and as sudden extinction, to mislead than direct me."

"What a pity! for he had mind enough to appreciate the conduct which your mother ridiculed; and believe me, Jane, that to a succession of personal sacrifices like these, I owe

that indifference to dress, and consequently that want of temptation to extravagance in it, which, though I may have carried it too far, has preserved me from many of the miseries which you have endured. But Lady L—— only witnessed one instance in which, in principle, my mother founded my education on an annihilation of selfishness. From childhood I was taught to share every thing that was given me with others, and to consider myself last. That eagerness, that greediness to be first and best served, which disgusts one every day in children, was never conquered in me, because it was never suffered to gain ground, —and all my habits were those of regard to the accommodation of others before that of my own. Less acute observers than my revered parents were, would laugh at these plans, and fancy them trifling and unnecessary; but depend on it that the moralists of all ages have not only considered man as a bundle of habits, but the human character is made up of almost as many imperceptible particles, of which habits are the chief ingredient, as those which compose a mosaic pavement—and it is on the purity, the brilliancy, and the strength of those component parts that the value of a character or the beauty of a pavement depends."

"Very true, Anne. But *still* the question is not decided to my satisfaction, why I was so different from you from *earliest* childhood. Lavish I always was; and though I was always ready to give to others, I was equally fond of giving to myself.—I should have been a princess certainly, for where others gave ten pounds I always gave fifty."

"Then I hope you would have been a princess without a principality, else your subjects would have been greatly to have been pitied; for unless economy be the basis of even a *prince's* virtues and charities, he will in time be as poor as the meanest of his subjects."

"Ay—but economy was never a word in my vocabulary, nor in that of any one belonging to me; and when I read of Cleopatra's dissolving a most precious pearl and drinking it off, I always admired her spirit, and wished I could do the same."

"That is exaggeration, Lady Jane; but still a weaker and uncorrected feeling of that sort has been the cause of your errors;—but I fear that these results of a bad education cannot now be gotten rid of, and all we can do is to endeavour to *curb* the propensities which we cannot wholly remove."

"Heigho!" cried Lady Jane, "I fear what you say is just. But don't you think, Lady Anne, the safest way would be to put me, not into a house of absolute lunatics, but in a receptacle for those who are only half and half."

"But there is no such place."

"Very true, Anne, and I fear that there never *can* be; for the demand for such houses, if once begun, would be so *great*, that there would never be found hands enough to build, nor ground enough to build upon. But a truce with reflection and satire, and let me dress for the opera. Yet, no; I have a confession to make," she added, her beautiful eyes suddenly filling with tears, "which has long weighed on my mind. The forgetfulness of *self*, which was taught you in childhood, has distinguished you in every action of your riper years; and that consideration of self which was taught *me* in childhood, has shown itself, in many serious instances, in my matured life."

"Well, Jane—but this is no new confession."

"No; but have patience. Alas! dear unsuspicious Anne, no sooner did I see that Percy preferred you, than my jealousy of you took fire, and though I did not love Percy, I could not bear that he should love you better than me.

"The consequence was, that I left no art untried when he returned from abroad, to convince him that I was deeply impressed in his favour; and as I felt no real tenderness, it was easy for me to affect it in my manner; while *you*, too conscious to dare to let your real feelings be known, wrapt yourself up in coldness and reserve, till the poor youth, fancying you almost disliked him, sought refuge in my inviting smiles and obvious partiality."

"Why do you tell me this?" exclaimed Lady Anne much agitated; "It can do me no good."

"No; but it relieves my mind; and Oh! Anne, grudge me not this relief, for a severe retributive justice has overtaken me; and the heart of Percy, whom I now love as he ought to be loved, is at length estranged from me by my faults, and attracted towards you by those virtues which, but for my base selfishness, would have rendered him happy." So saying she rushed out of the room, leaving Lady Anne resolved that she would return to Green Rock as soon as ever she could.

But the jealous pangs of Lady Jane were soon lost in others of a more terrible, though not so bitter and corrosive a nature.

Who can say where the consequences of a wrong action will end? A criminal or an erroneous act is like an arrow winged out of sight; no one knows whither it is gone, nor whom it may wound. It was impossible for a Lord Lorimer not to boast of having had a visit from Lady Anne Mortimer, of whom he now chose to profess himself deeply enamoured.

"A visit, and alone!"

"Yes, that is to say attended only by her servants."

"You are a happy fellow! I did not even know she was in town!"

"Very likely not; mine was the first house she drove to."

"I can't believe it," said one. "This is one of your boasts," said another. However,

at last one gentleman who heard it, and who hated Lord Lorimer, thought proper to tell Percy what he had heard. Percy immediately exclaimed, "It must be false; Lady Anne Mortimer could never degrade herself so much, nor violate decorum so grossly."

"But I heard Lord Lorimer assert it; and whether true or false, his prating ought to be put a stop to."

"What can I do? Stay; I will write him a note, asking him whether he did say so and so."

"Do so."

And Percy, having despatched his note, received the following answer:

"Dear Sir,—I certainly *did* say that I had the honour of a visit from Lady Anne Mortimer, as soon as she arrived in town, and attended by servants only; for in so saying I told the truth. Yours, &c.,

"LORIMER."

"Amazement!" cried Percy, more hurt and more alarmed than he wished to appear; for this was no boast, he was afraid it was some business of Lady Jane's, some wish to serve her that could alone have led her to such a deed; and telling his friend Colonel Rothrie that he would be back very soon, he went to interrogate Lady Anne herself. Luckily, he found her alone. And after some vague, embarrassed conversation, he said, "Oh! *à propos*,—a gentleman told me what I could not believe, that you had paid a visit to that coxcomb, Lord Lorimer, and attended only by servants."

"And did the gentleman believe it?" said Lady Anne, struggling to appear calm.

"Oh no! it has been much talked of, but nobody believed it."

"I thought so," said Lady Anne, proudly. "I knew the world was generally just, and that it would not be ready to believe a tale to the prejudice of Lady Anne Mortimer!"

"Then it is not true; and you did not call at Lord Lorimer's?"

"I did not say so," replied Lady Anne turning pale.

"O heaven!" cried Percy turning pale also, "then you *did* call on him! and I am sure that nothing but the necessity of doing some great kindness to my unhappy wife could have led you to do so strange a thing."

"I had Mr. Moreton, a very respectable man, with me the whole time or rather in sight; therefore, though he *is* my servant in one sense, he is a gentleman, and my Lord Lorimer tells a falsehood in saying I was attended only by servants."

"You evade answering my question,—*Why* did you go to Lord Lorimer's?"

"Mr. Percy," replied Lady Anne, "I am not accountable to *you* for my actions, nor will I answer a question which I deny your right to ask."

"It is very well—very well," replied Percy, "I shall know in time;" and rushing out of the room, he hastened into the street, and rejoined Colonel Rothrie.

"'Tis indeed true," said he, "Lady Anne owns it. What shall I now do? He is a scoundrel for mentioning her visit, and I suspect I have more reasons than one for calling him to account!"

"You have heard the other report then?"

"No;—What is it?"

"That Lady Jane has lost a large sum to him, and that the gentleman does not wish to be paid either in gold or notes;—but I dare say it is only talk."

Percy struck his forehead as if in agony, and having called for pen, ink, and paper, immediately wrote to demand of Lord Lorimer on what pretence Lady Anne called on him. The answer was this:

"Sir—I have not told nor will I tell the reason which induced Lady Anne Mortimer to honour me with a visit. I cannot do it as a MAN OF HONOUR.

"LORIMER."

This letter provoked a reply from Percy in which he asked Lord Lorimer if it was acting like a *man of honour*, to boast that he had received a visit from Lady Anne Mortimer *attended only* by her *servants*; when the fact was that she was accompanied by a respectable gentleman who alighted with her.—When once an angry correspondence takes place between men of the world, the consequences are usually obvious and unavoidable; and in a short time a challenge was given and accepted, and the time and place of meeting appointed. But it was not without many "compunctious visitings of conscience," that Percy complied with what he considered as the indisputable commands of worldly honour, and prepared to risk the valuable life of a husband and a father, against the weapon of a thoughtless profligate, one who might have said in the words of Orlando, "If killed, I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me; only in the world I fill up a place which may be better supplied when I have made it empty." Besides, he found it impossible to conceal from himself that his resentment against Lord Lorimer was occasioned more by a feeling of jealousy of *Lady Anne*, than of *Lady Jane*;—and that his thirst of vengeance was excited not so much by Lord Lorimer's reported designs on his wife, as by his now avowed admiration of her admirable cousin. "I will not return home this evening, till I am sure my children are in bed," said Percy to himself, as he leaned in mournful thought on a table in the coffee-house whence he had despatched the fatal notes to Lord Lorimer; "for, if I were to see them again with the consciousness that I saw them possibly for the last time, my agitation would certainly betray me.—No!

nor will I return till I think Jane and Lady Anne are both retired for the night." And he kept his resolution,—but in vain; for he found Lady Anne reading in the drawing-room, and when he saw her he started with the conscious confusion of guilt; while Lady Anne, aware that something was the matter with him, regarded him with looks of anxious inquiry.

"How is Jane," said he; "my dear cousin?"

"Very unwell, and gone to bed."

"Indeed!" he replied. "Then I shall continue to sleep where I have done since her illness, lest I disturb her." And so far her illness was convenient. Soon after, catching Lady Anne's eyes fixed upon him, he started up, unable to bear their expression, and ran out of the room. He then went softly into Lady Jane's apartment; and as she was in a sound sleep, he gazed on her some minutes, wishing but not daring to imprint a kiss on her flushed and fevered cheek; till, fearful of being surprised while thus indulging his feelings, he suddenly left the room, and shut himself up in his own apartment, whence he returned no more that night. Therefore Lady Anne, whose fears were dreadfully excited, had no means of ascertaining whether they were just or not, and she went to bed in a state of great agitation.

Alarming thoughts kept Lady Anne awake all night, and she had not closed her eyes, when, being alive to every noise, she heard some one go softly down stairs at six o'clock in the morning, open the hall door, and go out. She instantly ran to the window, and saw Percy and Colonel Rothrie walk to a hackney-coach which waited at a little distance, and which drove off with them very rapidly. "Then all my fears are realized, and he is gone to meet Lord Lorimer!" she exclaimed, beginning to dress herself with almost frantic haste, though when dressed she knew not how to act, nor how to prevent the meeting which she feared.—"But why should I thus torment myself with apprehensions that may be groundless?" thought Lady Anne; "Percy may be gone out as second only to Colonel Rothrie!" But when she recollected his question concerning her visit to Lord Lorimer, and his evident dejection of the preceding evening, she felt that her alarm was only too well-founded, and she threw herself on her bed in an agony of grief. The next moment she started up, resolved to hasten to the Park, for she recollected to have heard that duels were usually fought there. But she immediately gave up this wild idea, remembering how improper, and how fatal to the reputation of a man, is female interference on such occasions; and summoning all her self-command, she determined on the fortitude of remaining perfectly quiet and inactive; that difficult task when the mind is anxious and agitated, but which, generally speaking, is the most frequent and *becoming* duty of woman. Still, however, when the clock struck seven, Lady Anne could remain inactive no longer; but throwing her veil over her head she ran down stairs; and telling the porter she was going to take a turn in the Park, she hastened thither in a state of almost frantic anxiety, and turned down the path that led towards the Serpentine River. Suddenly her haste was impeded, and even her breath suspended, for she heard the sound of pistols; and in a terror that nearly deprived her of her senses, she clung to the railing near her for support, unable to proceed, yet equally incapable of remaining where she was. At length, however, she made a violent effort, and ran rapidly towards the spot whence the sound had proceeded. But long before she was near enough to be recognised herself by any one on the banks of the water, she saw a gentleman advancing, whom she instantly knew to be Percy, and evidently in perfect safety! It was enough! and uttering "Thank God! he lives! he is safe!" Lady Anne, ashamed of her emotion, and afraid of being seen and known, turned back, and endeavoured to leave the Park as rapidly as she entered it. But this was impossible; tears, amounting to sobs, impeded her power of motion, and she was forced to lean against the same rail for support under the agonies of joy, which she had so lately leaned against in all the misery of apprehension. But while she did so, she turned round again, in order to make "assurance doubly sure" that Percy was unhurt; and then she plainly saw Lord Lorimer, supported by two gentlemen, evidently wounded, though able to walk, while Percy and Colonel Rothrie were walking by his side. Lady Anne had seen enough to quiet her alarms entirely, for Percy was not only safe himself, but apparently he had not endangered the existence of another; and invigorated by this consciousness she pressed rapidly forward, nor did she stop again till she reached home. But, alas! when she re-entered the house, such tidings awaited her, as banished from her mind even the sense of joy excited there by the safety of Percy.

By a most unfortunate coincidence, a favourite little dog of Lady Jane's had that morning followed some one into the street, and was brought home worried to death, just as one of the house-maids, who had seen her master go out and drive off in a hackney-coach, was conferring with Ellis on this subject at the door of Lady Jane's apartment. It so happened that this woman had lived in a family, the master of which, while she was servant there, had been brought home killed in a duel; and having observed Lady Anne's alarmed and mournful expression, when she passed her on the stairs in her way to the Park, she had little difficulty in persuading herself that Percy was gone to fight a duel, and that Lady

Anne knew and suspected his intentions; and she was communicating her fears to Ellis, when a bustle in the hall made her break off, and run towards the gallery leading to the stairs. The noise proceeded from the servants, who were gathered round the body of the poor little dog, which was just now brought home by a neighbour, and the house-maid reached the gallery just as one of the servants exclaimed, "Yes! he is killed! quite killed! What will my poor lady say!" This was enough for the house-maid, whose fears for her master were already excited; and hastening back to Ellis, who was just going into Lady Jane's room to answer her bell which had that moment rung, she exclaimed, "I was right, he is killed! my poor master! he is killed! my poor master!"

As her door was open, Lady Jane distinctly heard these words; and springing out of bed, she saw by the countenances of her two servants that her ears had not deceived her. The whole truth immediately rushed on her maddening brain. Percy on her account had challenged Lord Lorimer, and she had been the means of destroying her husband!!! She fainted, tottered, and fell; and in a few hours, amidst dreadful convulsions, and in a state of utter unconsciousness, she gave birth to a dead child, and her life was despaired of.

Her danger and her sufferings called back all Percy's tenderness towards her, though his esteem was, he feared, irrecoverable; and when he considered that her life would in all probability fall a sacrifice to her affection for him, and agony for his supposed death, he scarcely knew how to endure the contrariety of his feelings,—and he was never easy except when hanging over her pillow and lavishing on the unconscious sufferer fond but mournful caresses. From that restless pillow, from that unconscious sufferer, Lady Anne never, never stirred. The cause of her sufferings, and her danger, endeared her to her heart still more. Percy's presence, Percy's influence were no longer felt or dreaded by her; her thoughts, her looks were fixed on one darling object alone, whose errors, serious as they were, were forgotten, while only her charms and her virtues lived in her remembrance; and Lady Anne, still herself in every situation, now shone in the new character of an affectionate and untired nurse. At length her anxiety was repaid by the recovery, the rapid recovery, of the object of it; for in one month after her life had been despaired of, Lady Jane, though still very weak, was able to be in her drawing-room. When she was thus far advanced towards convalescence, Percy begged Lady Anne to inform her of the duel, and its cause, in hopes that a consciousness of the danger in which her errors had involved her husband, would have a salutary effect on her conduct in future.

This was the first time that the subject of the duel had ever been mentioned, and Lady Anne took that opportunity of asking Percy whether the dispute with Lord Lorimer was not chiefly on her account; and on Percy's answering in the affirmative, she replied, "I needed no champion, Mr. Percy. I am myself the guardian of my honour! and strong in an unblemished life, I can defy the calumnies of any one.—Surely, surely, then," she added, with more tenderness of voice and manner, "you will not think it necessary, when Lord Lorimer recovers, to risk again so needlessly a life so precious!"

But to this direct question Percy gave an evasive answer, and all Lady Anne's fears were again excited. In consequence of which, she wrote a letter to Lord Lorimer, unknown to Percy, which, much to his honour, induced him to write such an apology to Lady Anne for having boasted of her visit, and such a note to Percy as would have precluded any necessity for even a professed duellist to call him out again; and it was judged expedient, both by Percy and Lady Anne, that, in order to prevent unpleasant reports and surmises, Lord Lorimer should be received at the house as usual, as an occasional guest.

Lady Anne, when all was thus amicably settled, disclosed the whole affair to Lady Jane; but she had the mortification of seeing, that though her cousin's agonies at the recital nearly amounted to frenzy, no hope, or expectation, seemed awakened in her mind of being able to conduct herself so as to avoid similar errors in future; for, too honest to feign the hope she felt not, Lady Jane never once said, "I will reform, I will profit by my past bitter experience."

One day as Percy and Lady Anne were sitting with the children, Lady Jane returned from her morning's drive, and entered the room with a very grave countenance; then, sending the little boys away, she said she wished to talk with Percy on business of importance.

"I come," said she, "from my uncle the minister, from my cousin ditto, and my uncle the bishop, on a deputation to *you*, Percy."

"Indeed! Well; open your credentials."

"My relations well know all the kindness you have ever shown me; for, in order to set you off in your true light, believe me I have never spared myself."

"That I believe indeed," said Percy, pressing her hand. "That we are sure of," said Lady Anne kindly.

"Therefore, they feel themselves bound in gratitude to do something, if they CAN, to mend the fortune I have tried to *mar*; and thus then they speak through *me*. They know you wish for the Albany peerage, though you shrink from the trouble of suing for it. It shall be yours, without suing for it,—yours by creation,—and they offer you your choice of the places now vacant by certain high resignations; or the embassy, now to dispose

of also, to the Ottoman Porte; which if you accept, as I earnestly hope you will, I shall have an opportunity of shining forth another Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in 'letters addressed to the Lady A—— M——.' These are offers made warm from the heart; for most eagerly do ministers, whether my relations or not, wish to be joined by a man of your talents and weight in the House."

"No doubt," said Lady Anne. But Percy was slow to reply; at last he said, "You well know, Jane, that I honour both the talents and integrity of your relations, as men; but as I have the misfortune to differ with them on two or three essential points, I must, however my pride, my ambition, and my wants may urge me to accept their offers, most unequivocally, though alas most *unwillingly*, reject them."

"O! how I rejoice!" cried Lady Anne: "And I grieve," said Lady Jane, "for *I* am no *politician*."

"Nor I neither, Jane," returned Lady Anne, "and I think the term when applied to a woman is a term of reproach. But if I were a wife, I should value my husband's political integrity, were he Whig or Tory, equal with his life, and should wish the one to be resigned only with the other. Therefore, as Percy, without an utter surrender of his political character, cannot accept these offers, I rejoice that he has rejected them; for it would indeed be a severe blow to me to be forced to forego the exalted idea of him which I now entertain."

"Thank ye, thank ye, my noble-minded friend!" cried Percy with great emotion.

"Ay! and could you have said noble-minded *wife* too," said Lady Jane mournfully, "you would not have been in a situation to have felt such offers temptations. Would I had died when I could unconsciously have breathed my last! Why did you try, why did you *wish* to save me? It would have been better for us all, if you had let me die." Here she gave way to an agony of distress, which gave exquisite pain to the hearts of her auditors.

"Jane, this must not be. You have no right," said Percy, "to distress us thus."

"No right! Have I no right to feel my own unworthiness—and, feeling, to deplore it?"

"Stop!" said Lady Anne, willing to turn the course of her ideas—"an idea has just struck me;—Is it *true*, Percy, that your affairs are in such a state as to make offers of this kind tempting to you?"

"They are indeed. My West-India estates have lately yielded little or nothing, and, and"—"I will fill up the sentence," cried Lady Jane, "he has had to pay unexpected sums for me!" "Then hear me," replied Lady Anne, "the *best* of us may yield in a moment of unexpected weakness to strong temptation. As an Archbishop Cranmer yielded to it, who can say that he shall always be proof against it?"

"True!" replied Percy sighing; "and who should therefore presume severely to blame another who has been found frail?"

"Well, then; I can without a single pang give up my establishment at Green Rock, and retire into some cheap part of England on one-third of my income. The rest I conjure you to appropriate to the gradual payment of your debts; and pay me when—"

"Hold!" cried Percy, "nor insult us so much as to suppose, if retrenchment be necessary, that it shall not be made by *us*; not *you*. No, generous woman! It is my intention to give up my town-house next year; and, if I continue in parliament, to come to a lodging when my presence is necessary; and this arrangement will, I trust, in a year or two set me free entirely."

"This arrangement!" cried Lady Jane; "and have you then fixed your plans without consulting me?"

"May I ask your ladyship," said Percy, "if after what has passed you can think you have any *right* to be consulted?"

"Oh no, no, no—forgive me! I know my own unworthiness. So then you prefer this scheme," said she recovering herself, "to acceptance of the offer I brought you!"

"Most assuredly."

"I am glad of it; as glad as Lady Anne: for if you had accepted it I know I should never have liked you so well again. I remember when I was a child I spent all my little money on a fine dress of my own invention for my doll, destroying the one it wore when I bought it; and I procured some gold leaf too to cover its nose and its cheeks with; and when I had thus made 'a thing of my own,' I never liked it as well as I did in its original state. And thus, had I made Percy a minister, and smeared him over with the gold leaf of places and privileges, I should never have liked him so well again, as I did when he was the independent man I first knew him. O my dearest husband! how glad I am that you have integrity, though I have none!"

"What you have just said, Jane, proves the contrary, and that virtue, though spell-bound, is not *dead* within you."

"But my dear Anne, if it never breaks the spell, it might as well be dead, you know." Here she burst into a long laugh, which almost alarmed Percy and her cousin. When it was over, she said, "A very charming idea has just struck me, my dear Percy,—I want you to sit to —— for a fancy portrait. But no, I forgot, you have no picture-money. However, Lady Anne has, and she will be very glad to pay for it; and the subject shall be Hercules between Pleasure and Virtue—that is *you* just now between Anne and me. Here was I, Pleasure you know, tempting you with places and embassies and all manner of fine things, Turkish beauties, and what not! and there was Anne, with her fine sentiments, and morals,

and heroics, bidding you be a good boy, and not listen to naughty women!"

"I am glad to see you can be so merry, Jane," said Lady Anne.

"Merry!" cried Lady Jane.

"Well; light-hearted if you will."

"Light-hearted! O the weight of such lightness!

'I laugh'd; but 'faith I am not light of soul;
And he who most Misfortune's scourge has felt,
Will tell you, Laughter is the child of Misery.'*

My mirth is embroidery on a *pall;* it is a gay and glittering mantle wrapped round a corpse. O Anne! Is the brilliancy of lightning wholesome? Is the hectic of fever healthy? Are these faded cheeks, these hollow eyes, signs of mirth and light-heartedness? Nay *mock* me not, my cousin! But check those tears, Anne; I deserve them not. Gracious heaven! what a contrast!" (seeing her own face and Lady Anne's together in the glass.) "Look at that cheek—even, pure, and wholesome as the mind to which it belongs; and yet it is an older cheek than mine! Anne, indeed I am very generous not to hate you."

"Jane! I must interfere," cried Percy;—"you distress your cousin, and me too. My dear love, you are very nervous and irritable today, and fanciful;—I doubt that—"

"Yes, you are right; I am under the influence of a strong opiate. Dearest Anne! compose yourself," she added; but Lady Anne hastily quitted the room. "Nor is the contrast in person, greater than in mind," continued Lady Jane. "How strange it is! The only wish of her pure and innocent heart was disappointed, yet *she* had not recourse to dissipation or vice. She did not fit herself to exclaim with the poet:—

'—All this giddy waste of years;—
This tiresome round of palling pleasures!
Hadst thou been mine, had all been hush'd.
This cheek, now pale with early riot,
With passion's hectic ne'er had flush'd,
But bloom'd in calm domestic quiet!'

while I, happy in every granted wish of mine, *I* could not exist without taking drams, forsooth!"

"Drams!"

"Ay, drams;—what is gaming but a mental dram—an alternation of hope and fear, which the disappointed and the wretched fly to, men and women, sated and sick of every thing, in order to give them that artificial interest which their feelings are become incapable of? But I was not disappointed—I was happy;—'blessed beyond my sex's charter;' and yet I gamed, and yet I squandered money! and yet I wasted the most precious years of life in heartless dissipation! O why did you save me from an unconscious death? for if I am conscious, my death-bed will be a dreadful one."

* See Miss Baillie's Plays.

"My dear Jane," said Percy, "this distressing agitation is the result of too frequent stimuli and want of sleep, and I *insist* on your lying down and trying to compose yourself."

"But will you stay with me? will you watch by me as in our happier days?"

"Yes, I will—I will do my duty, Jane."

"Your duty! O, Percy! your duty was your pleasure once!"

"And is now, dear, captious, suspicious being!"

"And you will sit by me?"

"Yes."

"Then perhaps I may once more sleep quietly." And Percy had soon the satisfaction of seeing her sink into a tolerably composed slumber.

Such scenes as the foregoing now frequently took place; and sometimes when Percy and her cousin urged her to retire with them and the children to Green Rock, and give up the dissipation into which she was again plunging, she very justly replied, "I know and feel the value of these rational and virtuous pleasures, which you hold out to me; but I have now no power of enjoying them. Rich meats, fine fruits, and choice wines are delicious things; but, if one has lost one's taste or one's digestion, they are offered to our lip in vain;—and so it is with me. My pursuits compared to yours, are as sour small-beer to pure Burgundy! But, if I can only digest the former, I must persist to refuse the latter. You should have let me *die;* and that would have been better for us all;—and yet, and yet! After death comes judgment, Anne! And how does my account stand?"

Though Lady Anne's rigid principles made her wish to withdraw herself from the society of Percy, she gave up all idea of leaving Lady Jane while she continued in her present state of mind, because she did not think it right that Lady Jane should be left to the painful influence of her own corroding reflections; nor could she give up all hope of awakening her, in some moment of self-reproach, to strong and effective efforts towards amendment; so difficult is it for affection to relinquish the cheering expectation of reforming its object,—so prone is it to hope on, till a resistless conviction flashes on the soul, that the reformation, at first *improbable* perhaps, is now, even to the sanguine eye of love, become *impossible.*

But in order to explain the events that are soon to follow, I must go back to a fête given a few months before her illness by Lady Jane. I have before said that her taste was unrivalled, and her expenditure to gratify it unbounded. An inner apartment, in which supper was to be served for the ——, was converted into an entire bower of roses—and roses so natural in their appearance, and at a distance even in their fragrance, especially as real ones were mixed with them, that the eye

and even the smell were deceived. She had bespoken these admirable flowers of her great man on such occasions, and he had procured them from a poor man near the Seven Dials, who had been taught to make them by an indigent Italian, who had lodged at his house, and *died* there. This man, whose name was Walters, was the most improper person possible to be employed for a paymaster like Lady Jane, as he always owed his money before he earned it; not so much from extravagance, as from the wish to buy little comforts for his wife, on whom he doted. Walters had seen better days, and his pride had not fallen with his fortunes; he had a virtuous horror, I may call it, both of a workhouse and a prison; but he wanted at the same time that virtuous firmness of character which resists running in debt, as the sure precursor of both. As soon therefore as his money for his flowers was due, he dunned Mr. —— for it; and he, knowing Lady Jane would not pay him for years perhaps, refused to advance the smallest sum out of his own pocket, but desired him to go with his demand to Lady Jane herself, and say he sent him. Lady Jane therefore got the bill, accompanied by a statement of great poverty; and she had on this occasion the feeling, and the justice, to go to Percy with the account, which amounted to a considerable sum, as since the fête he had made for her roses and other flowers. Percy immediately gave her the money; but that evening she lost it all at the card-table, and the poor wife of Walters was dismissed the next day with *promises* instead of *payment*. Again and again she came, till Ellis once more presented the account to Lady Jane, who started with conscious baseness when she saw it; nor could she be easy till she told Lady Anne the circumstance, and received money to discharge it. But the next morning a tale of woe was presented to her of a very shocking kind; and as the general patroness of distress, Lady Jane gave to Charity what she ought to have given to Justice, and Mrs. Walters was again dismissed unpaid.—This was certainly an aggravated case; but still, severe was the retribution.

Poor Walters, oppressed with debts, though two-thirds of the money due would have paid them all, continued to dun by turns Mr. —— and Lady Jane; but the latter never heard of his repeated applications, as the rule of the house was, not to trouble their lady till creditors grew very clamorous; and Mr. —— still refused to pay him, because he was not yet paid *himself*. To fruitless dunning soon succeeded the mischievous alternative of *drinking*. The patience of Walters' creditors was at last exhausted; and one day, when to the temporary exhilaration of dram-drinking had succeeded its consequent irritation and exhaustion, two bailiffs entered his now denuded apartment, and produced a writ against him. In vain his wife shrieked, and knelt, and prayed for time; it could not be granted, and poor Walters must go to prison. They had just been eating their dinner (alas! their last meal together,) and the table was not cleared.

"You know Fanny," said he, "I have always said I never would go to prison,—nor will I now;" and in an instant he cut his throat with the knife with which he had been eating, and sunk a bleeding corpse on the floor.

His wife—but she, I hope, was spared some agonies, even by the violence of those she endured, as all sense was immediately suspended in her, and reason completely overthrown. So that, in ten days after her poor husband's suicide, she was the inmate of a madhouse! whence, however, she had been dismissed as cured, at the very time that Lady Jane was first able to visit as usual.

Lady Anne and Percy had at length succeeded, they thought, in calming Lady Jane's mind, and convincing her that, if she would but forego her bad habits, she would in time acquire good ones, and that the virtues of her future life, (and she was not yet thirty) would expiate, they trusted, the follies of her youth.

But Lady Jane was not so likely to amend her conduct, as many other women under her circumstances would have been; because she had those popular virtues which throw a glittering veil over the vices of a character, and thereby bestow on it a false radiance difficult to detect. Lady Jane knew that those errors which had injured her husband's peace and fortune, and lowered her in his esteem, were either not known to the world, or were forgotten in her deeds of charity, her active benevolence, and the fascinations of her person; and though her heart was wounded by a sense of her faults, it required more strength of mind than she possessed, to break through habits the indulgence of which did not destroy that popularity which was her favourite idol.

Perhaps there are no characters so dangerous in society as those which unite great virtues with great faults, and seduce by the former into imitation or toleration of the latter; while the unwary imitator, who would have shrunk with aversion from the contagion of errors unaccompanied by the attractions of virtues, becomes a prey to the one unconsciously, by means of the other,—as he, who would on principle reject the alcohol of a dram-shop, eagerly and unconsciously swallows the pernicious spirit when hidden in the palatable shape of a *liqueur*.

"Well, give me only till the season is over," said Lady Jane one evening, "and then I will turn hermit and live at Green Rock. And then

'——may I breathe my last,
Blessed by the tongues that charm'd my youthful ear,

Mourned by the few my soul acknowledged here,
Deplored by those in early days allied,
And unremember'd by the world beside!'

But I am now so much improved in my looks, that I begin to relish society again. See, Anne, don't you think I am very good-looking to-night? But I am not quite dressed yet. When I burst on you in all my glory, I flatter myself you will admire."

"Poor soul! in all her *glory!* Is *that* a woman's glory?" said Lady Anne to herself; and she was glad to be roused from a painful reverie by the entrance of Percy and the children.

"I thought you were going with Lady Jane," said Percy.—"No—I have a bad headache, and wish to go to rest early," she replied;—when, dressed most becomingly in a robe of white satin, and in a blaze of jewels, Lady Jane entered the room.

"I flatter myself, good people," cried she gaily, "that I am quite beautiful to-night.—I have coloured my cheeks as like Anne's as possible, and what with judicious displays, and more judicious concealments, I think I am quite the thing."

"You look like a *young* bride, Jane," said Percy.

"If I look *young* I am contented, as I do not wish to be a bride again."

Alas! she was more like a victim dressed for sacrifice.

"Well, my darlings," said she to the boys, "I see you are dazzled by my jewels. But in truth, as the wise Cornelia said, you are my jewels; and I trust that ere long I shall prove by my actions that I think so."

"God speed the time!" cried Percy.—"Amen!" said Lady Anne; while Lady Jane, affectionately kissing her, said with one of her sweetest smiles, "Ay, kind, good Anne, I know I have always your good wishes; and when I deserve your good *word* too, it will be the proudest day of my life."—Percy now interrupted her, to bid her good night, as he must go to the House, being already later than he wished to be. Soon after his departure, her carriage was announced, and Lady Jane took leave of her children and Lady Anne, which she did with much of her former playfulness; and turning back at the door, she kissed her hand smiling as in her happiest hours,—destined alas! to smile no more in this world.—A crowd, as usual, had assembled at the steps, where her carriage usually waited some time, to see Lady Jane get in. She now appeared brilliant and beautiful as ever, and stopped an instant on the last step, perhaps for the pleasure of displaying herself. At this instant a woman rushed up to her, and almost buried a knife in her body. Lady Jane shrieked and fell, while the incensed populace seized the assassin, and one of the servants drew the knife out of the wound.

Lady Anne had luckily just sent the boys to bed, who had been allowed as a frolic to sit up till eleven;—for the shriek reached her ears, and she flew rapidly into the hall. Alas! what a sight met her view! That beloved being, who had so lately left her radiant with conscious loveliness, and full of renewed hope of happiness to come, now bleeding and motionless, borne on the servants' arms, and probably in the very agonies of death! A deep groan burst from Lady Anne, which roused the senses of the sufferer; and Lady Jane, opening her eyes, recognised the pale and agonized countenance which bent over her in tearless, speechless sorrow; and shaking her head mournfully, she motioned to lay her head on her bosom. Jennings, meanwhile, had ordered the coachman to drive full speed to the House for his master, but only to say an accident had happened to his lady.

"What is to be done with the murderer, my lady?" said one of the servants to Lady Anne.

"Murderer!" cried she shuddering.

"Yes, my lady,—this is she," and Lady Jane involuntarily following the direction of his eyes, saw a poor wild wretched-looking woman held between two men.

"Take that woman away! take her away! the sight of her distracts me!" said Lady Anne with a scream of horror; and she was taken into a room below.

"Who is she, do you know!" murmured Lady Jane, who as yet resisted their wishes to carry her up stairs.

"I don't know who she is, my lady, but she says her name is Walters."

"Walters!" muttered Lady Jane, "Walters! I should know . . ." and suddenly recollecting her debt to the poor flower-man, she hid her face in Lady Anne's bosom, and groaned piteously.

"Do, dearest Jane, let us remove you up stairs," said Lady Anne.

"No,—lest I bleed to death before Percy comes." Nor, when a surgeon arrived, would she allow herself to be examined till Percy came.

Percy had left Lady Jane that evening with much of his former tenderness towards her renewed. She had looked more like her former self than she had lately done. She had promised well, too; she had looked and spoken like a mother; and ever apt to regard the bright side of every thing, he had, on his way to the House, felt happier and more satisfied with his wife and his prospects than he had done for years . . . . when, on his approaching the House, he was met by a man who told him his carriage was waiting for him. Alarmed, he knew not why, he rushed hastily forward, exclaiming, "John, what is the matter?"

"My lady, sir," replied the man, scarcely able to speak, "an accident to my lady!" And Percy, not daring to ask more, was driven

home in a state of terrible anxiety. But his wildest fears could not have imagined a more dreadful scene than awaited him on his entrance to that home, which he had quitted so full of joyful expectation, and his feelings were still more agonized by what he heard from the crowd at the door.

"Percy is come!" whispered Lady Anne, averting her eyes from the overcoming agony of Percy's look, while with an exclamation of horror he rushed forward to clasp the poor victim in his arms. "Oh! who has done this?" exclaimed he, dreading to be told that it was the hand of revenge.

"A mad person," replied Lady Anne, "who is in custody; but more of that hereafter. She would not be moved or examined till you came, and Oh! the time has been very long!"

"Let Percy carry me," faltered out Lady Jane; and his scalding tears fell on her bosom, while he bore her in his trembling arms to her own apartment. Lady Jane was right; the motion, slight as it was, made the blood gush out afresh, and she fainted before she was laid on the bed. By this time, two of the first surgeons in London were arrived, whom Lady Anne had sent for; and, having cut away her dress, the wound was examined. It was deep, but they hoped not mortal; yet there was great danger to be apprehended, danger of a mortification. Meanwhile, Lady Jane had recovered from her swoon, but her countenance wore the settled habit of despair; and Percy, unable to bear the scene, left the room for a while. It then occurred to him that it was right he should interrogate the murderer; and though Jennings violently opposed his doing it, he was resolved, and went into the room below. "A woman!" exclaimed he, averting his head with agony from the being who had perhaps murdered his wife; "What, poor wretch! could lead you to such a crime?"

"She is mad, dear sir," said Jennings, eagerly.

"Yes,—I am mad," replied she, "but then who made me so? My Lady Percy!"

Percy started, but said, "Go on—who are you?"

"I am nobody now, and have nothing; but I was once Walters, the flower-maker's happy wife;—for he was the best of husbands."

"And where is he?" asked Percy.

"In heaven, I hope, though he did cut his throat rather than go to prison, because my Lady Percy would not pay him, and so he ran in debt!"

Here, if Jennings had not supported him, Percy would have fallen on the ground, and the woman went on, for he could not interrupt her.——"Well,—I saw him die; and for two months I was, I fancy, dead too,—but I came to life again, and went home,—to a home without Walters; but as soon as I got settled he appeared to me; but I won't tell what he said, though I did as he bade me,—and that very night amongst some rubbish I found the very knife he used to kill himself. Oh! says I, this is what he meant;—so I hid it in my bosom, for I knew a use for it,—and I did as Walters bade me, and I revenged him, for I have killed Lady Percy."

Percy could bear no more, and was rushing out of the room; but making a great effort, he turned back, saying, "See that she is kindly and humanely treated, for the poor creature is certainly insane." True; but he felt only too bitterly that she had "method in her madness," and he well recollected giving Lady Jane money to pay Walters, a flower-man.

The poor woman had, on her return home, found by accident the knife her husband had used in his suicide; and the sight of it having overset her reason again, her bewildered brain had fancied she saw Walters, and that he told her to kill Lady Jane, and with that same weapon.

It was certainly with increased agony that Percy returned into his wife's apartment, who was now undressed, and lying composedly in her bed,—while Lady Anne, white and motionless as a statue, stood gazing on her in mournful silence.

"Let me speak to you one moment," said Percy, alarmed at her death-like appearance, and Lady Anne suffered him to lead her from the bed. "Do you not remember the name of Walters, a flower-man, who made those beautiful roses for one of the poor soul's fêtes?"

"I do,—but I also know that this bill was paid, for I gave her money to pay it."

"Ay—and so did *I*; but depend upon it, it was never paid."

"No!"

"Though the poor woman be mad, her story is but too probable!"

"No, no; I will hear no more," said Lady Anne, turning very faint, and laying her head on Lady Jane's pillow. Percy, too restless to be stationary, and anxious to know the truth, now went in search of Ellis, and interrogated her so closely, that Ellis, bursting into tears, confirmed all the woman had said; adding that, though she knew the end of the unhappy Walters, she had carefully kept it from Lady Jane, for she well knew how it would afflict her.

"Dreadful!" said Percy to himself, "what a fate is mine! for I must in justice and humanity maintain through her future existence the being who has deprived my wife of hers! Yet I must do it; must, where I can, atone for the errors of the wretched Jane!"

Percy now returned to the apartment of the sufferer, but he forbore to name to Lady Anne what he saw she wished to remain ignorant of. That night Lady Jane, though she did not sleep, lay quiet and silent, except that

every now and then she groaned dreadfully; and when Lady Anne, who never moved from her, tenderly inquired whether it was pain from the wound that occasioned her to groan, she shook her head, and faintly murmured;—"Pain of the mind! Pain of the mind!" Percy, meanwhile, wandered from room to room, too wretched to sit still, and too anxious concerning his unhappy wife to think of endeavouring to take repose.

Early in the morning the surgeons came again, and seemed to think unfavourably of the appearance of the wound, while Lady Jane fixed her eager eyes on their face as if she would read their every thought. When they had ended their consultation, Lady Anne followed them out to ask their real opinion, and Lady Jane was therefore left alone with the physician who attended with them. "I cannot make out entirely," said Lady Jane, in a sort of whisper to him, "who it was that thus wounded me; do you know, sir? for I feel that I should be much easier if I knew the whole truth, as then I should be spared these ever-restless conjectures;" and the physician, not suspecting that she had a clue to Mrs. Walters' bloody deed which he had not, and feeling that anguish and restlessness in her situation must be mischievous, told her that a mad woman of the name of Walters had wounded her; a poor woman who had gone mad in consequence of seeing her husband cut his throat to avoid going to prison for debt. And as soon as he had said this, he saw Lady Jane hide her face in the bed-clothes, and heard her utter groans to which he could not endure to listen, till Lady Anne overhearing her ran into the room, with a face even of more woe than when she quitted it. As soon as the physician was gone, Lady Jane, slowly and with great effort, told her, she found her suspicions true, and that it had been *blood* for *blood;* — nor could Lady Anne's declarations of ignorance on the subject, which were literally true, at all weaken Lady Jane's horrible but just convictions. "Let me unburden my mind to some one," said she. "Shall I send for your uncle?" asked Lady Anne. "No!" she replied, "I will see him before I die, but I will not shock his affections and wound his pride by unveiling to him the whole of his niece's delinquency." But before any clergyman could arrive, a violent delirium came on, and her children, whom she had wished to see, were forbidden to enter.

What were not the agonies of Percy and Lady Anne, to find that the images uppermost in her mind were the self-murdered Walters and his frantic wife! "Look! there they are!" she exclaimed; — "Take them away! take them away!" while she pathetically prayed her husband and her cousin to shield her from their wrath, and from their just retribution.

Alas! while she was thus severely expiating the result of error, which, though not leading to intentional guilt, yet from its pernicious magnitude was as dreadful in its consequence as guilt which had been intended, the newspapers were full of loud laments for her danger, and loud execrations of her assassin. The sonnetteer wrote and published verses declaring the probable extinction of such a luminary as Lady Jane Percy to be as much to be dreaded as that of the sun himself; for that her bounty and influence, like his, diffused happiness and plenty on all around her; while relations, friends, acquaintances, and even strangers, thronged her door from night till morning with inquiries after her situation; and even the gayest assemblies were rendered gloomy, by the appearance in every corner of the room of groups evidently formed to discuss the mournful fate of the once certain ornament and delight of every scene that she honoured with her presence; and on her table at home, the eye of the unhappy and conscious husband was continually met by books, in the first page of which he read a dedication praising Lady Jane Percy as the most exalted, most benevolent, and most spotless of her sex; till maddened by what to him appeared mockery at such a moment, he used to dash the lying pages with indignation on the ground.

But if it was agony to them to witness Lady Jane's delirium, it was even tenfold pain to watch beside her dying bed when delirium had subsided, when mortification had actually taken place, when returning sense, and absence from pain, proclaimed her dissolution near, and she was at her own earnest desire assured that her fate was inevitable.

"And is it really so? And must I die?" she violently exclaimed; "I, who am so ill prepared for death! I, who have wasted what all the good value and improve, in vicious pleasures, and neglect of positive duties!"

"Jane, Jane; have mercy on me!" said Percy, falling on his knees beside her, and kissing her clenched hand, clenched with the agony of her soul. "Look at your poor cousin! see how she suffers—and do not torture us thus."

"Suffers! she suffers! Why the greatest sufferings of virtue like hers, are pleasures to the pangs I feel from the consciousness of guilt! Do you forget," she wildly added, "that there is *blood* upon my conscience?"

"These are the ravings of a distempered imagination, dearest Jane. Do yourself justice! Remember your virtues as well as your failings! Remember you have been a fond, faithful wife!"

"And with such a husband that was great merit, was it not?" she said with an ironical smile. Here she paused; for a sudden alteration took place in her countenance, and Lady Anne's ever-watchful eye read in it the approaches of death.

"Quick, quick," cried Lady Jane, "send

for my uncle! let me—let me—have his prayers in my last moments!" And Ellis ran into the apartment below to fetch both her uncles, who in mournful silence were waiting to attend the death-bed of one who had ever been the pride and often the charm of their existence. But they arrived too late. Lady Jane again deplored her past life, her waste of time, the neglect of her cousin's precepts and example, the distress she had occasioned both to her and to her husband; when, suddenly seizing Lady Anne's hand, she exclaimed, "Pray for me! pray for me, Anne, I am dying! and Oh! how full of dread! how full of reluctance! .Yet let me die performing one just deed."—Then putting Lady Anne's hand in that of Percy, she joined and pressed them together, and tried to express her wishes and her meaning. But the power of utterance was gone; and pressing their united hands to her cold, clammy lips, she seemed, as she raised her eyes to heaven, to murmur an inward prayer; and sinking back on her pillow, she expired without a groan.

AUSTIN AND HIS WIFE.

There are few truths, perhaps, of which we want to be more frequently reminded by striking and alarming illustrations than those with which we are the best acquainted.

We are all such self-deluders, as to be apt to fancy that what we have long known, and admitted in theory, we must necessarily never deviate from in practice. Hence nothing is more common than to hear habitual violaters of truth express the most virtuous horror of falsehood, till some dire result of their mischievous propensity, or some warning example, teaches them to look into themselves, and learn, though usually too late, that it is one thing to admire right rules of acting, and another to act rightly. There never was a parent probably who did not highly approve those golden rules of action laid down for us in the apologues called Æsop's fables;—no mother ever read without conviction as well as horror the tale of the thief who bit off his mother's ear before he ascended the scaffold; or perused without thoroughly assenting to it, the wise application at the end of that warning tale which says—"It is a mistaken notion in people when they imagine that there is no occasion for restraining or regulating the actions of very young children, which though allowed to be wrong in those of a more advanced age, are in them, they suppose, altogether innocent and inoffensive. But however innocent they may be as to their intention *then*, yet as the practice may grow upon them unobserved, and root itself into a *habit*, they ought to be checked in their *first efforts* towards any thing that is *injurious* and *dishonest*."

These are truths to which every one who reads implicitly subscribes, and the united world agree "that just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined;" still, how many of those who thus subscribe and thus admire, allow their offspring, uncorrected by judicious reproof, and undeterred by proper punishment, to indulge habits of lying, fraud, and every thing that makes the child odious, and may make the man dishonest and detestable, till he might, like the thief in the fable, inflict horrible justice on his weak or neglectful parents; who by suffering a first fault to go unpunished, encouraged him to form habits of wickedness which ended in misery and destruction!

"It is strange," said Brograve, an intelligent but odd-tempered tradesman in the town of L——, to Austin, a shopkeeper in the same place,—"It is strange that you and I, who agree so well on all other subjects, should disagree so much on the subject of education."

"In the means we certainly disagree," replied Austin; "but our end is the same, and the aim of both is to make our sons valuable members of the community."

"True," returned Brograve, "and I, believing that fear is one of the most powerful of all passions, think that children are only to be frightened into good habits, while you imagine that *indulgence* is all in all."

"No such thing,—I think the extreme of indulgence and the extreme of severity are equally unfavourable."

"Then why do you spoil Edwin?"

"I deny that I *do* spoil him."

"But you suffer your wife to spoil him, and that is nearly the same thing; for certain it is he has bad habits, whether you know it or not; and such as my son Hugh *dares* not have. Hugh *dares* not err; because, if he did, he knows I would give him a hearty beating."

"At least," said Austin, "if he did err, he would, with such a punishment hanging in terror over him, take special care to conceal his faults from you, and I consider such brutal severity as a certain way of teaching a child habits of lying and dissimulation."

"Nonsense! for my child *dares* not lie, *dares* not conceal any thing from me; because he knows if he did that I should not scruple to flay him alive!"

"It is necessary, then, for your poor child to be born *perfect*, and to have none of the frailties of his fellow-creatures, since if he errs, and owns it, you would beat him severely, and if he lies to conceal his crime, you would flay him alive?"

"No, that is not a fair statement; but waiving that point, let me ask you, on what principle you indulge Edwin?"

"I deny that I do so; and whenever my son does wrong, I tell him of his fault, and try to reason him out of it, and if he commits it a

second time, I punish him. If it be a serious fault, and one mischievous in its tendency, I punish it severely the *first* time to prevent a repetition of it."

"What, by a good horsewhip?"

"Oh no; by withholding from him a promised pleasure, while exciting him to good actions by the prospect of reward; for corporal punishment can only be necessary where a child has contracted such deeply-rooted habits of wickedness as to have become little better than a brute."

"Well—*I* believe more in the efficacy of a positive beating, than in the infliction of any privation whatever; but we shall see, as our sons grow up, which mode of education was best. And we at least agree, that in persons in our line of life, it is more necessary that an early foundation of truth and honesty should be laid than in any other."

"Yes," replied Austin, "for I look on our class in society, as it is the most numerous next to the lowest order of all, to be, as it were, the chief depository of a country's virtue and a country's happiness, as our morality has not those artificial fences which guard the higher orders. The gentleman, beginning from the class immediately above us till one comes to the highest of all ranks, a rank above restraint because above responsibility, is restrained from lying, fraud, and so forth, by a sort of factitious honour, if he has not the real one. He is always acting a part, and must abstain at least from ungentlemanly vices, though he may not have good principles. Therefore, though he may game, intrigue, and run in debt, he is not exposed to those temptations which in a humbler walk of life lead to lying, to dishonest practices in trade, to swindling, to the road, and to the gallows."

"Ay, there we agree; and therefore while you indulge your boy, though convinced of the necessity of giving him such principles as would, if general, make the *many* in a nation oppose a successful barrier to the vices of the *few*, I give mine these necessary good habits, by that most powerful of all agents, terror; but whether you are in fault or not, I can't say; only certain it is that Edwin, as I said before, is a naughty boy, and his mother winks at his faults, if *you* do not."

"This is a serious charge against my wife," said Austin, "and I believe a false one; but you have put me on my guard, and I will be very watchful in future." So saying, he wished Brograve good night, and returned full of thought to his home.

That Austin generally practised what he preached was very true; but though he suspected it not, his wife, a foolish, fond mother, counteracted his rational views of education; and as the mother sees so much more of a child than the father does, it is in a mother's power alone, perhaps, to give bad habits, or to form good ones. But Austin was not yet conscious of his wife's weakness, nor its effects, as appearances were at present completely in Edwin's favour.

Brograve was, however, a greater dupe than Austin; his severity had had the usual effect of severity—it had taught dissimulation—and while his son was all trembling submission and virtuous propriety in his presence, out of it he most thoroughly deserved the appellation bestowed on him of "little blackguard;" but every one being aware of Brograve's temper, the poor boy was so generally commiserated, that no one would inform against him, lest the punishment inflicted on him by his father should far surpass the offence. But this was an unnecessary forbearance; for so obstinate was Brograve, and so bigoted to his own plan of education, that nothing but the evidence of his own eyes and ears could have convinced him that his son dared to err.

Austin, however, was doomed to have his eyes opened to some of the evil tendencies of Edwin, a very short time after the conversation took place which I have related above.

"Well—how do you do?" said Brograve one evening to Austin and his wife, while they were drinking tea.

"Pray walk in," said Mrs. Austin, kindly, and perhaps you will take a cup of tea with us."

"Well, I don't care if I do," said Brograve, while Austin, more discerning than his wife, did not bid him welcome, though he offered him a chair; for he read on his countenance an expression of malignant pleasure, only too common to it, and he was sure that he came to see them from no benevolent motives; nor was it long before he discovered that his suspicions were just; for, unsoftened by the truly kind feeling which led Mrs. Austin to make fresh tea, and that of the best sort, while she cut up a new loaf, and took out of her closet some wedding-cake which had been sent her, the coarse-minded Brograve began thus:

"So, Austin! I don't see Edwin with you, where is he this evening?"

"I conclude he stayed after school, as he often does, to play with his school-fellows."

"Very likely when he comes home he will tell you so."

"Tell me so! and if he does I shall believe him; for my child does not lie, Mr. Brograve."

"Don't be sure of that," replied Brograve; "for the reason Edwin is not home is, that his master first flogged him severely for telling a base falsehood, and has since shut him up till he has gotten a certain number of English verses by heart."

"I can't believe it, I will not believe it," cried the distressed father; while Mrs. Austin, though she looked angry, did not look *incredulous*, and indignantly told the officious Brograve that it was no business of his, and

it was very wrong in him to come and try to set parents against their children.

"But I see by your look you believe me, though your husband does not; for you know Edwin better than *he* does."

"Is that true, wife?" said Austin, turning round with a stern look.

"Well, if ever I saw *so* mischievous a man!" cried Mrs. Austin, evading the question.

"Now you want to make my husband distrustful of me."

"I wish I *could*," replied Brograve, "for it might be of service; for everybody says that you spoil Edwin, and that you wink at his faults, and hide them from his father,—who would correct him out of them perhaps,—still who knows but that the boy will be hanged in time!"

At this brutal speech, Mrs. Austin burst into tears.

"This is too much to bear," cried Austin; "do you come hither merely to insult my wife and slander my son?"

"You insulted me first, remember, by doubting I did not tell you truth of your son; but it *is true*, for I had it from one of the *ushers* himself, and also from one of the boys."

"They ought both to be whipped," sobbed out Mrs. Austin, "for telling tales out of school."

"So *I* think," said Austin; "but if Edwin did lie, and I fear he really did, much as I disapprove of corporeal punishments, I wish the master had flogged him twice instead of once, and I hope he will keep him the whole evening at his lessons."

"Well, well, I have told you what a sad boy young Hopeful is, because I thought it my duty, that you *might* punish him; for mothers, I know, are apt to be silly, and chicken-hearted;—but I see you take it ill, and look askance at me, and so good night! I can only say I have brought up *my* son very differently, and you 'll see how *he* will turn out."

"I would not question or reprove you before that man," said Austin when Brograve was gone; "but *now*, I command you to tell me whether his charge against you was true or false.—Does Edwin tell lies? and are you so wickedly and mischievously weak as to hide his faults from me, lest I should punish him?"

"I am sure I meant no harm," replied Mrs. Austin, weeping, and frightened at seeing a frown on the usually placid, benevolent brow of her husband.—"To be sure, Edwin, like other children, will be naughty sometimes, and as I have taken him to task myself, I thought there was no need to vex you by letting you know it."

"But does he ever lie?"

"Now and then." On which the poor father rose and walked up and down his little parlour in great agitation.

"Listen to me," said he, "and mark well my words;—you have violated your duty both as a wife and a mother; as a wife, by having concealments from me; and as a mother, by not enabling me to bestow on our child that serious advice and wholesome chastisement which are necessary to form good habits, and prevent bad ones.—Woman! remember the fable of the thief and his mother."

"I am sure I wish that nasty, spiteful, mischief-making fellow had never come hither," said Mrs. Austin, still sobbing. "You never spoke so crossly to me before, and it is all along of him."

"Wife," said Austin, "though I know his motives were bad, not good, yet I thank him, because I hope to benefit by what he told me,—as it is wise to take advice even from an enemy."

"I think you and he too make a great fuss about nothing, husband. If Edwin was a big boy indeed, his telling a lie would be a shocking thing; but for a little boy, not quite six years old! who hardly knows right from wrong!"

"Don't believe that; a child of *four* years old knows right from wrong as well as a person of forty, and the boy who lies at four years old *will* lie when he is a big boy, and it is to *prevent* this, one ought to reason or punish him out of this fault when a child. I have heard it said, that when a boy becomes old enough to reason, he will reason himself out of this error of his childhood; but, in the first place, this is assuming an untenable position,—namely, that all persons are conscious of their own defects; secondly, as a love of trouble and effort is by no means natural to us, I am inclined to believe that we had all of us rather yield to an habitual fault than strive to correct it; and that those children are the most indebted to their parents, who, thanks to their watchful care, have the fewest bad habits to correct. Look at this piece of iron, my dear, which I have bought for one of my experiments."

"I do—and a fine piece it is."

"Pshaw!" muttered Austin aside, "listen to me; if I heat this by fire, and endeavour while the heat has rendered it pliable to bend it into a particular shape, I can do it with ease; but if I wait, before I try to mould it, till it has become hard, I cannot bend or alter it."

"But, my dear, why *should* you wait till it is hard?" asked Mrs. Austin with great simplicity.

"That is what I ask you," replied Austin smiling, "why should you put off the time for amending your child's faults, and giving him proper dispositions, till he is grown up, and his habits are become too rigid to be altered? For *mind* is like *matter*, and must be worked upon before its bend is fixed. This

iron I can heat and thereby render pliable again; but no process that any one can apply to the human mind can operate in like manner on that, and there matter has the advantage over mind; but mind and matter, philosophers think——"

"But my dear love, I am no philosopher," said Mrs. Austin gravely. And Austin replying "Very true, my dear," with a look, I fear, of conscious superiority — dropped the conversation, till his wife renewed it thus:—

"But my dear Edwin will naturally learn to know better when he grows older."

Austin felt mortified on hearing this, feeling that he had the same ground to go over again.

"Naturally!" replied he; "what do you *mean* by nature, I wonder?"

"Mean! what should I mean? Nature is nature."

"Pshaw!" cried Austin again. "But habit is a second nature, wife; or perhaps what we call nature is after all nothing but habits imperceptibly formed; therefore, should ours, or any other child amend as he grows up, it certainly will not be naturally. No—the natural progress of habits, of falsehood for instance, in our line of life, is fraud and dishonesty, and concealed enormities of all kinds."

"But why in *our* line of life particularly?"

"Because the gentleman's son when he goes to college, or into the world, is kept from lying and fraud by the fear of shame—for he knows he would else run the risk of being told he was no gentleman, and must, therefore, either quit the society of gentlemen, or run the risk of having his brains blown out in a duel. But our son, should he be vicious, will, I am sorry to say, never be in a situation to be restrained by these salutary fears and dangers."

"Sorry to say! James! I am sure, I am heartily glad that he never will be. Brains blown out! Dear me, why the thought makes me all in a flutter."

"Then don't think of it; and to resume the subject more pleasantly—I dare say, my dear, you always mend in a stocking or shirt the smallest hole as soon as you see it."

"To be sure I do," replied Mrs. Austin eagerly, for here she was quite at home,—"And why? because, as the old saw says, 'One stitch in time saves nine.'"

"Excellent!" said Austin, smiling, "Now apply that wise saying to education, and the business is *done*. Correct the faults, the first faults of the *child*, and the man having few efforts to make will bless you while he lives. But come, give me a kiss; I am sorry I distressed you by any thing I have said. Believe me, however, it is for your good, and that of our darling; for he *is* our darling, and our *only* one, my dear Sarah; and if he does not turn out well, remember we have no other child—But here he is."

The boy entered the house with a confident air, though a conscious eye; for he meant to tell some lie to account for his long stay at school, secure that his father would not suspect him, and that if his mother did she would not betray him.

"So, sir," said his father, "why are you home so late?"

"O! Papa, only because——" Here his mother, assured that he was going to invent an excuse, interrupted him with, "Naughty boy, we know all, so you need not tell us; for Mr. Brograve says——"

"Be silent!" angrily interrupted her husband in *his* turn, "You know you stopped the meditated lie on his lips. Come with me into your chamber, sir—for I choose to speak to you alone, and I have much to say!" So saying he led the frighted but still pert child away, and the mother dared not follow. In a few minutes she heard the child crying very violently, and ran up stairs.

"He provoked me to knock him down," cried Austin, pale with emotion; "for though put on his guard by *you*, I have only *now* been able to extort a full confession from him. Oh! that fable, how it haunts me! I protest I shall expect soon, you little wretch, to hear of your having stolen a horn-book!"

"A horn-book!" cried the boy pertly. "No, indeed; if I steal, it shall be something handsomer!"

"If you steal!" cried Austin, shocked at this unpromising speech.

"I told you, my dear," said his mother, "that he was too young to know right from wrong."

"Peace, woman! He knows very well that if you bid him not to touch your cake, or your sugar, while you are gone, and he does so, he commits a *theft*; and if he were to make a practice of such things, and you, instead of punishing him, were only to say, 'You are a naughty boy,' I tell you that you would be breeding up your child for the gallows. To crime, alas! I fear he is already in a degree callous; for he was not shocked at my fearing he should steal, but at my thinking him likely to steal so mean a thing. I *suspect* therefore that he has already been given to petty thefts which you have been so wicked as to conceal from me." His conscious wife *could* not answer, for she knew what he said to be true, and so did the boy; but he only pouted and looked sulky.

"Now go to bed, sir," cried his father. "Your master has done his duty by you today, I will see how I can best do mine by you to-morrow."

"I won't go to bed without my supper, though," sobbed out Edwin; "that I won't."

"Say that word again, and you shall live on bread and water for a week," replied Austin; and the boy threw himself into such violent and frantic passion as alarmed his mother; but his father taking her by the arm, led her

down stairs, and locked Edwin into his room alone. "O wife!" said he, with tears in his eyes, "this is the first wretched night I have known since I married you! My eyes are at last open, and God grant it may not be too late!"

More angry than alarmed, more fretted than convinced, Mrs. Austin did nothing but cry the rest of the evening; and after her husband had seen Edwin undress himself, and get into bed, she had the weakness to steal up to his room, and soothe and caress him till he fell asleep; and though she dared not give him supper, she put a piece of the bride-cake I mentioned before in his mouth unknown to her husband. Still she meant well, and thought herself the best of mothers; the error was in her head, not her heart, and like all weak people she would not submit to be guided by any one. Therefore, though she adored her husband, she thought that since her feelings as a mother were natural feelings, they could not mislead her; and consequently though she did not openly oppose her husband's will with respect to Edwin, she did it in secret, thus setting her child an *example* of *disingenuousness.*

The next morning Austin told Edwin that he had at length fixed on a proper mode of punishing him for his wicked falsehoods of the preceding day, and that he should not be allowed to go to the fair which was to take place the next week.

"But all the other boys are going, and I have had two half-crowns given me to spend," exclaimed the boy.

"I am glad of it! for then you will be the more severely punished, and will be more likely never to commit such faults again." "O! indeed, papa, I never will, only try me this once! and I will, indeed I will, be a good boy in future!" But in vain he cried and prayed, and his mother also; the justly alarmed father, too virtuously affectionate to yield a point on which he thought his son's future good depended, put considerable violence on his feelings, and remained firm. Day after day he was thus assailed, and still he kept his resolution. The rest of the boys had a holiday and went to the fair, but Edwin remained at home. His mother, however, unable to resist his tears and entreaties, let him, when his father supposed he was in bed and asleep, accompany the maid and her brother in a walk through the fair, and he returned laden with gingerbread and a wagon which he had bought with his half-crowns.

"Foolish child!" said the mother, when she saw the wagon, "what have you done? The wagon will make your father suspect that you have been to the fair."

"Oh, no! ma'am," cried Betty, "I can tell master that I bought it as a present for master Edwin;" and the weak mother saying "Very true Betty, so you can," the poor child received *another* lesson in that science of dissimulation in which he was already too great an adept.

Mrs. Austin had been her husband's first love, and he had been hers; but as she had an independent fortune of a few hundred pounds, and Austin had nothing, her parents forbade her to marry him; and she obeyed; though with much sorrow and reluctance. While her lover, mortified at her practising so well the virtue of obedience, and thinking that, if she had loved him as well as he loved her, she would by resisting have carried her point at last, left the town where she lived, and went to another part of the kingdom. There, full of pique against the, in his opinion, cold-hearted Sarah, he embraced an opportunity of marrying advantageously, and obtained a wife and a lucrative trade at the same time. But Austin loved as men love; the forsaken Sarah loved as women love; and when told that Austin was married, she formed in her heart a solemn resolution, for his sake, never to marry; and though often urged by her parents to accept some one of the respectable offers which were made her, she firmly, though gently, resisted their solicitations; and once she added, "I gave up the man I loved out of duty to you; therefore I hope you will allow that I have a right to remain single to please myself."

Accounts of Austin and his wife often reached the town where Sarah lived, and she was congratulated sometimes on not having married him, because he was reported to be a dissipated husband.

"Remember," she used to reply, "that he was disappointed of his first love—he would, I dare say, have been a good husband to me; and who knows," she used to add, "that this report is not false, and that he is not a good husband to the wife he has married?"

After Austin had been married about ten years his wife died, leaving no children, and his first inquiry was whether Sarah was still single. He heard in reply that she was so, and that her parents were both dead; and in a few weeks afterwards he returned to his native place on a visit. Sarah meanwhile heard with no small perturbation that he was expected, for now there were no obstacles to their marrying, should Austin's love for her revive; but then that might not be. "When we parted," said she to herself, "I was only three-and-twenty, and there is a great difference between a woman of twenty-three and one of thirty-three; besides, I have fretted in secret, and have lost that bloom which once distinguished me! Yet surely," thought Sarah, (and she sighed as she thought it,) "if Austin knew that I had lost my colour on his account, though he did not think me so pretty, he would love me the more!"

Austin meanwhile arrived sooner than was expected, and the first walk he took was past the house where Sarah lived. He looked into

the little window of her parlour as well as he could while walking by; but she was not there—however, he distinguished, and recognised with some emotion a little drawing which he had made, a bad copy from a bad print, and which was one of his first gifts to Sarah, for *she* thought it pretty, beholding it not with the eye of taste, but *love;* and, framed and glazed, it still made one of the ornaments of her sitting-room. This little circumstance, together with the information that though she had had several good offers she had refused them all, and declared her resolution never to marry, gave him great encouragement.

"How does she look?" said he to a mutual friend.

"Oh, very ill—so thin and pale, to what she was when you knew her! Indeed she is very much altered."

"I am altered too in ten years," replied Austin.

"But she looks as if she had known *care*."

"And so have *I* known care, and plenty of it too!" cried Austin sighing; "but it is over now—and who knows but Sarah and I may be happy together yet!"

Soon after his friend, at his desire, asked Sarah to allow him as an old acquaintance to call on her, and she agreed to receive him the next morning. When the time appointed for the interview drew nigh, Austin's own ten years added to his age disturbed him as much as Sarah's did her. "For if," said he to himself, "she did not love me dearly enough when I was young and good-looking, she will not be likely to love me now I am not young, and am altered for the worse;" and by this time he was at Sarah's door. He was shown into her little parlour, which the closing of another door opposite convinced him she had that instant quitted; and this he thought a good omen, as *flutter* perhaps had occasioned her retreat. He also saw that his *drawing* had been removed, and that he deemed a better omen still. At length, after many fruitless efforts, Sarah summoned resolution enough to open the door, the handle of which had for half a minute trembled in her hand.

"How do you do, Mr. Austin?" said she, putting out her hand, and half drawing it back again.

"How are you, Miss Mallows?" replied he, taking her cold hand and letting it fall again—then seating himself without being asked, while Sarah sat down also.

Never was there a more cold uninteresting conversation—for both were too conscious to revert to past times; and though Austin *looked* a great deal of love, and emotion had made Sarah *seem* as blooming and beautiful as ever, he could not, dared not, *utter* any, as his wife was so recently dead;—while Sarah, being aware of what Austin's looks expressed, was more intent on finding something to fix her eyes upon than in imagining pleasant topics for conversation. At length Austin, though reluctantly, rose to depart,—"I hope I shall see you again before you go, Mr. Austin," said Sarah.

"No—I fear not—I must return again to business to-morrow—I only came just to see old friends,—but I shall come again soon and stay longer." Then venturing to press the hand timidly held out to him, he retired a happier man than he came.

"How could you tell me she was altered?" said he to his friend.

"Why so she is,—and looks like a ghost!"

"Like a ghost! She has as fine a bloom as ever."

"Bloom!—If so, then it must be a hectic colour, and the poor thing is in a consumption."

"God forbid!" cried Austin, turning pale, "and to be sure she is very thin!" while all his spirits vanished immediately.

Sarah meanwhile had no drawback to the pleasure she felt on seeing Austin again, especially as she was sure he was still fond of her, though he had been so faithless as to marry another woman. To be brief; when Austin came again, he opened his whole heart to Sarah, and was allowed to read the pure, unsullied page of woman's faith in *hers*. They married and were happy; and in four years she gave birth, after many disappointments, to a living child. Never was offspring more fondly welcomed, and never were the feelings of parental pride in that early stage of a child's existence more completely gratified; for Edwin's beauty was the admiration of every one, and he was pronounced to be one of the largest infants ever seen. There is something so attractive in beauty from its earliest dawn to its meridian, that one cannot wonder that the parents of a beautiful child are tempted to spoil it by too great indulgence;—but reason, if they be reasoning beings, must convince them that unwise indulgence defeats its own aim, if that aim be the happiness of the offspring so spoiled,—as experience and observation afford daily proofs that the happiest children are those who are the best governed. The sickly because pallid appetite, or the ravenous, because overloaded stomach, the diseased listlessness, and the fretful temper which attend on pampered and ill-managed children, are unknown to the child of regular and plain diet and of well-governed temper;—cheerfulness and uninterrupted good-humour beam upon their smooth brow, and dimple their health-mottled cheek; and when they grow up to man's or woman's estate, who shall pretend to say that those habituated in childhood to curb and deny their *little* appetites and passions, will not be best able to struggle with and to surmount the passions and appetites of their *riper* years; Austin was convinced of this, for he had thought as well as felt, and was prepared to act on his convictions; but his wife *felt* only, or, if she pretended to reason

it was on wrong grounds; for her argument, as she called it, was—"Poor things! when they grow up and go into the world they will meet with contradictions and hardships enough, therefore 'tis pity to contradict and thwart them when young;" forgetting that those most used to have their wishes gratified must suffer the most keenly the disappointments which await them; and that spoiling a child on this principle of mistaken kindness, is turning him out naked and unarmed against a host of armed and formidable assailants. However, Mrs. Austin could not be convinced she was wrong, therefore her husband's superior wisdom did not counteract the effect of her folly. Not that Austin himself was capable of practising all that he preached; far from it, for Temper, that universal agent in all human actions, from the hour of our birth to the last minutes of our existence, however unseen, and however disguised, was in him, unhappily, too often at work; Temper excited naturally enough into a pernicious influence on the future character of Edwin, by the officious and frequently malignant interference of Brograve. Parents rarely, if ever, forgive any interference with the management of their children; and the Austins had every parental feeling, good or bad, in its full force. Therefore when Brograve came, as he frequently did, with some tale of poor Edwin's naughtiness at school, and advised some of that wholesome correction which he had always bestowed upon his own son, Temper almost invariably forbade Austin to do what his neighbour advised—because he knew that punishing Edwin would give him pleasure;—therefore, whenever the boy returned in disgrace from school, his little heart rejoiced as soon as he saw Brograve, because he had already shrewdness enough to see that Brograve's being his enemy made his father his friend; and many a time had Edwin been suffered to eat himself into indigestion and a headache, because Brograve wondered how the Austins could cram their child so foolishly,—holding up the temperance to which he forced his son as a laudable example.

"I almost hate that man!" poor Mrs. Austin used to say. "When I had no children he was so brutal as to reproach me with being childless; and now that I have a child, and as lovely, promising a boy as the sun ever shone upon, he reproaches me with not knowing how to manage him!" while the reproach sank the deeper because she felt that it was not altogether undeserved.

Brograve was, it is true, a man of brutal manners, the result of a bad temper; and to say galling, teasing, mortifying things was one of the greatest delights of his life—for it is a great mistake to suppose that where Temper once gains considerable sway, it ever rests till it has corrupted the heart and deeply stained the disposition with malignity.—Alas! who that has ever associated with the ready slaves of Temper, but has writhed beneath the scorpion whip of their sarcasm, and received in their self-love a deep indented wound, to rankle there until the last expiring throb of life! It may be asked, why the Austins admitted the visits of Brograve. One reason was, that he had some dealings in business with Austin; another, that he was of the same politics, and was, indeed, his friend as much as his disposition would let him be the friend of any one. Besides, Brograve had lost his wife, and his only child was at this period gone to a boarding-school; therefore he was, generally speaking, a solitary man, and the kind benevolent feelings of the Austins led them to tolerate the visits which they could not relish.

With all Brograve's alertness to gain a knowledge of Edwin's misdeeds, some, I may say *unhappily*, escaped his vigilance; for though Austin often, through spite, allowed what he too negligently thought venial faults to go unpunished, he never failed to chastise any thing approaching crime; and had not the child early learnt to be so great a liar himself, that he did not believe in the truth of others, it is probable that he might have been cured of the vice of lying as soon as it became known to his father; because Austin held out to his son complete impunity for any fault he might commit, provided he honestly and openly confessed it, and did not by falsehood endeavour to evade detection. But Edwin, not trusting to his father's word, because he knew that no reliance was to be placed on his own, continued, with the cruelly kind privity of his mother, to lie, and lie undetected.

One day as Edwin was walking in their little garden, Mrs. Austin saw something shining in his hand, which he was surveying with evident pleasure; and coming upon him unawares, she saw it was a netted purse with steel tassels. "Where did you get that purse?" said his mother pale with alarm.

"I found it," replied the boy.

"Found it! are you sure you found it—and where?"

"Why, I tell you I did find it," cried Edwin surlily, "and that's enough."

"No, it is *not*, sir,—I must know *where* you found it."

"I shall not tell you."

"Very well, sir; then your father shall make you."

"Do you threaten me?" exclaimed the young tyrant; "take that then," and he gave her with his fist a blow on the face, which made the blood gush from her nostrils over her handkerchief and gown.

"And your father shall see me thus too," faltered out Mrs. Austin, her heart suffering more than her face from the cruelty and ingratitude of the child she adored. But Edwin, who really loved his mother, though he

was too clever not to see her weakness, and to despise her in consequence of it, fell at her feet, wrapped his arms round her, and with frantic exclamations of regret, with trickling tears and vehement kisses, conjured her "to believe in his penitence, to forgive his fault, and to conceal it from his father!" to which in the weakness of her heart she acceded. Thus a fault so serious, so big with future mischief, as a blow given in passion and revenge by a child to an affectionate mother, remained unpunished by that mother, and its pernicious influence uncounteracted by the warning voice and salutary severity of paternal admonition.

But she had sense enough to add, "I will tell your father, notwithstanding, if you don't confess where you got that purse."

"I found it in a path leading from our playground hither," said Edwin.

"And did you not inquire, whether no one had dropped it?"

"That was no business of mine," replied he again sulkily.

"There you are mistaken," returned Mrs. Austin; "in common honesty you were bound to produce what you had found, and try to find an owner for it." (During this time Mrs. Austin's face continued to bleed, but she was too much interested in what she was saying to attend to it.)

"It is all nonsense," exclaimed Edwin, "I found it, and so it is mine now."

"So far from it, that I *insist* on your carrying it back to school, and proclaiming that you have it."

"I won't."

"Then, sir, your father must make you," coolly answered his, for once, firm mother. And the boy, seeing she was in earnest, was beginning to coax her with, "But, my dear mother, my pretty mamma!" and "Only hear me first, my darling mother," when at this moment one of the ushers knocked at the door; and having been told by Austin, whom he met in the street, that his wife and son were in the garden, he came to them unannounced.

"My business, Edwin, is with you," said he with seeming carelessness. "I dropped my purse yesterday somewhere in the path leading from the play-ground hither; for I remember taking it out there, and not putting it up again; and as your way home lies through that path, I thought, perhaps, you might have found it!"

"Is it a blue purse with shining tassels, sir?" cried the boy blushing, while his mother was too much fluttered to speak.

"Yes, it was."

"Oh dear! then I am so glad!" exclaimed the artful child; "for I did find it, and was now this moment, as my mother will tell you, coming to proclaim what I had found to the whole school, in order to find an owner!"

"I wonder you did not do so when you first found it," replied the usher, with a look of suspicion; "but where is it? there were only ten shillings in silver and a seven-shilling-piece in it;" and taking it from the conscious boy, he told the money, but found only nine shillings.

"Oh dear! I had forgot," cried Edwin;—"I took a shilling out, and here it is!" while the usher, after a struggle with himself, said, as the poor mother was present, "Well, you may keep that;" but he spoke it with a look which seemed to say, "It is more, however, than you deserve." Then turning to Mrs. Austin, he started on observing her bloody appearance, and asked whence it came.

Ashamed to speak the truth, and afraid at the same time (for she knew that as a conscientious man the usher must punish her son in some way or other,) she weakly evaded the question, by saying, she had had a blow on the nose—then, glad to be alone, she made the necessity of applying a styptic, and changing her dress, an excuse for bidding him good morning. What the usher said to Edwin when she was gone, nobody knows; for Edwin would not tell, and the usher, contented with having done his duty, was too generous to tell himself. But reproof from him was the only punishment inflicted on Edwin, for an action which was certainly the next thing to a theft;—and when the poor deceived Austin bade God bless his child that night by the title of good boy, his disingenuous and culpable wife forbore to tell him that his *good* boy had struck her a blow from the impulse of revenge, and had exhibited proofs of dishonesty, by an act which, if not corrected in time, might lead to terrible mischiefs!

But alas! Mrs. Austin was too weak, and too wilfully blind to the probable consequences of her criminal concealment, to give her husband this proper and necessary information; nor had she even the *slender* merit of showing her offending son, by her manner towards him, that she had a deep sense of his misconduct, and resented it as it deserved; on the contrary, she behaved to him as if he had not erred; and how completely confounded must be that child's conceptions of right and wrong, whose parent neither punishes severely such flagrant derelictions of duty, nor expresses by word, by look, or action, the horror of foreboding anguish which they ought to call forth in the bosom of thinking and well-principled parents! And in a few days this thoughtless mother even forgot the circumstance entirely; for Edwin obtained a prize at school for his quickness in learning, and he came home one evening with a *black eye*, the cause of which gratified both her vanity and her tenderness.

"Well, good folks!" said Brograve, that evening, "how do you do?" then rubbing his hands he added, "There is Edwin coming

home with such a black eye! I wonder what scrape young Graceless has got into *now!*"

"A black eye! dear me! I hope—" cried his mother anxiously.

"Oh! ay—I suppose," interrupted Brograve, "you hope it has not spoiled his beauty! but it would be so much the better for him perhaps if it had,—for with that handsome face of his he stands a chance of being spoiled by the women as well as by papa and mamma. But here he comes! look at mamma's darling—pray do!". Edwin did indeed enter with an eye dreadfully disfigured, though not injured; but his mother, who knew thoroughly the expression of his countenance, read nothing of the perturbation of guilt on it, therefore foresaw no punishment for him, and no triumph for Brograve.

"Thou unlucky boy! what hast thou been doing now?" exclaimed his father.

"Ay—no good—I'll be bound for it," cried Brograve.

"I have been fighting," replied the boy, firmly, darting a fierce look at Brograve, "and with a boy bigger than myself."

"There 's no great harm in that," said his father.

"No, if this be really the case," observed Brograve.

"The whole school saw it," proudly answered Edwin—"there goes one of the ushers: ask him, if you like."

Brograve immediately ran after him, and with a mortified look returned preceding the usher.

"I give you joy, madam," said the good-natured usher, "of your young and zealous champion; though really in such a cause I would almost have risked a black eye myself."

"Was it on account of his mother that he fought?" asked his father with quickness.

"Yes," replied Edwin, bursting into tears; "yes,—that great brute Soames called my mother an ugly old woman and a bad mother; and so I struck him, and so we went to blows, till I could see no longer!"

"Bravo! there was a good boy!" cried Brograve trying to hide his mortification under a laugh; while the delighted mother hugged her child to her bosom, kissed his tears away, and carefully examined the effects of the blow, the precious pledge of her son's zealous love.

"Give us your hand, my man," said his father, with the tone of deeply-awakened sensibility; "you shall not repent, I promise you, that you raised your arm in defence of your mother!"

This exploit, which certainly was a proof of good feeling and of courage, raised Edwin high in the estimation of his father, and if possible endeared him still more to his mother, nor did it fail to exalt his character in the eyes of his school-fellows, and at fifteen when his father began to think it time to bind him out apprentice, the beauty of his face and person, the plausibility of his manners, and the quickness of his talents, caused him to be spoken of as a lad of much promise by all but Brograve, who felt a father's jealousy, and used to observe when Edwin was praised in his hearing, "Ay—ay—it is all very well; but the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and all 's not gold that glitters; and we shall see whether he 'll turn out as well as my Hugh has done, and get as forward in life."

About this time Mrs. Austin was seized with a dangerous illness, and Edwin's attention to his sick mother was the admiration of every one. On her recovery, therefore, she was congratulated by all her friends on the unwearied attention and affection which her son had shown her.

"Ay," replied the gratified mother, "I always knew he loved me;—but he would not have been so fond of me, you know, if I had not been kind to him, and spoiled him as some people think;—your severe mothers who correct their children are never loved by them!"

Poor woman! she did not consider that love unaccompanied by respect is not much worth having from any one.

Nor indeed was her assertion true;—for it is the observation of every unprejudiced person, that those parents are treated by their children through life with the most regular affection and respect, whose conduct towards their offspring, through every stage of their existence, has been marked by undeviating principle and ever-watchful care,—by salutary severity tempered by parental indulgence,—and who laid down for their education rules of right acting, which they enforced by *habitual firmness;* rules that like the steady flame which guided the children of Israel at night from the land of Egypt, led them safely through the dangers of childhood, and quitted them not till every peril was past.

At length the hour arrived when, however reluctantly, the Austins must part with their son in order that he might be taught a business and gain his own livelihood. When Austin married his second wife, he gave up, to oblige her, his business in the city of ——, and retired to his native place, where he opened a small shop, only just large enough to employ part of his money, and to give him something to do; resolving that Edwin, if after a year's trial he should like the business which Austin had left, namely that of a chemist and druggist, should be articled as assistant to the person to whom he had resigned his shop, with a view to become a partner in it when he was out of his time; and Austin and his wife intended going to reside at ——, to be near their son as soon as he was in business for himself.

Austin was a man fond of reading, and he had also a little smattering of science. The former he indulged when he lived at ——, by

subscribing to, and frequenting a public library; and the latter by chemical experiments, which, if they did not improve the knowledge of others, at least served to amuse himself; and he hoped that Edwin would have the same taste, for he knew that such a taste would serve to endear his business to him.

It was a sad day for the poor mother when she bade Edwin adieu! but she tried to console herself by the thought that it was for his good, and also by the promise that he would always visit them for a few days at Christmas; and at Midsummer her husband assured her he would drive her over to see him. Austin accompanied his son to the place of his destination, and when he took leave of him he could only comfort himself by the idea that he was returning to a wife whom he doted on, and who would soothe his regrets by sharing in them to the utmost. Nor was Edwin without his feelings and his regrets,—and, his weekly letters continued to express every sentiment which his indulgent parent desired. But when the year of trial was nearly at an end, and Christmas being almost arrived, Edwin was to return the visit which his parents had made him in the summer, they found his letters become less frequent and less long, and they began to fear that absence and distance had weakened his affection towards them. Still he wrote with much apparent delight of the prospect he had of seeing them soon, and of eating his Christmas dinner with them; and as parents are apt to flatter themselves, the good Austins attributed the brevity and rarity of their son's letters to press of business, a business which he assured them he liked better and better every day. His mother meanwhile had been busily and happily employed in preparing for Christmas;—for, was she not preparing to welcome her heart's treasure and her affection's pride? —and the mince-meat was made, the turkey bought, and the raisins stoned, ready for the Christmas dinner, with a joy and an alacrity which none but those preparing to feast a long-absent object of devoted love can know or understand.

A few, a very few of the friends whom Edwin loved best were invited to meet him; and before the time of his expected arrival drew nigh, his anxious father went to the coach office, to be in readiness to receive him. The mother, meanwhile, was busy in making cakes and jellies to please the luxurious palate of Edwin, or she would have been at the office too; —but she broke off from her employment to listen to every noise, thinking he was come, and several times she ran to the window fancying she saw him through the blinds.—What then must have been her sorrow and disappointment when her husband returned saying, both the mails had been through, and Edwin was in neither of them! It was with difficulty the disappointed mother could prevail on herself to finish the no longer pleasant tasks she had begun,—and though she welcomed her guests with her lips and words, her heart and her thoughts were with her absent child.—Nor could Austin himself recover his disappointment;—though his native politeness and hospitality made him do the honours of a very excellent table in his usual friendly manner, and he forced himself to eat in order to induce others to do the same;—but his poor wife could not carry her self-control so far; and though she was very ready in helping her friends, she could not swallow any thing herself; nor could she join the jest, or listen to the carol; for the mother's darling was absent, and the mother's heart was joyless.

At last came the postman, and instead of Edwin they received a letter from him, telling them that he was preparing to set off,—when he was seized with a violent cold, which forced him to stay where he was; but he hoped that a night or two's rest would restore him; and he desired them not to write, for before he could receive their letter he should probably be on his road home.

"I thought," said Austin, "there must be some very strong and essential reason for the boy's disappointing his mother and me. But, what's the matter, wife? Come, foolish woman! drink a glass of wine to Edwin's recovery, and don't cry! He will be here soon! A cold is not a fever!"

"But it may end in one!" she replied. And though pleased that Edwin had so good an excuse for not coming, her anxious maternal heart was pained because that excuse was illness.

That night they went to bed, happy in the bliss of ignorance! The next day neither Edwin nor a letter came. The third day brought them a letter, but not from their son. It came from his master, and contained overwhelming intelligence indeed!

It so happened that the wife of the chemist with whom he was living had a sister married to an opulent tradesman in London, and like other fashionable people she thought she had better pass the Christmas vacation out of London; therefore she invited herself to pay a visit to her sister. This woman was young, exquisitely beautiful, excessively extravagant, and equally depraved; and her husband, who was not young, and very ugly, was jealous of her with great reason. Unfortunately for Edwin, his excessive beauty of face and person immediately called forth her attention and riveted her admiration;—and a poor youth, only just seventeen, not accustomed to the slightest self-denial, but "curst with every granted prayer," was not likely to oppose a barrier of principle and duty to the dangerous advances of so captivating a being.

Two days before Christmas this well-practised seducer pretended to receive a summons from London to a sick friend, and set off by herself in a post-chaise; but she went no fur-

ther than the first stage, where Edwin joined her, having taken leave of his master, in order, as he said, to proceed to ——, taking care before he set off to put his lying letter of excuses in the post-office. While, therefore, his anxious parents supposed him detained from their longing sight by unexpected and unwelcome illness, he was in reality at an inn on the road living in adultery with a profligate woman, who passed him off for her husband's son by a first wife! But detection soon followed the crime; a person who knew both Edwin and the lady saw them at the inn window, and communicated what he saw to Mr. Maule, who immediately mounted his horse and rode to the scene of iniquity. Regard for Mrs. Verney's reputation as the sister of his wife, and his wife's tears and entreaties, prevented Mr. Maule from betraying her infamy to her husband, and he contented himself with exacting from her a solemn promise to break off all connexion with Edwin. Then, having secured a place for her in the mail-coach, he insisted that she should return by it instantly to London and to her husband; allowing her to say in excuse for her sudden return, that he had quarrelled with her, and behaved so rudely that she could stay no longer at his house; and he did not leave her till he saw her drive off in the mail. How to dispose of Edwin was a more difficult matter; but he resolved to take him back with him, and write his father a full account of every thing. A disclosure he could not avoid; for his wife had solemnly protested she would not, could not, live in the house with a young man who had seduced and probably brought infamy on her sister; he therefore wrote that letter to the parents which banished every feeling of comfort from their hearts.

When Austin could speak, and at first utterance was wholly denied him, he exclaimed, while his half-frantic wife was reading the letter in pale and tearless sorrow:

"So, so, at seventeen he is already a complete liar and adulterer! O wife, I doubt you have to answer for the first! That letter, that accursed letter! a mark of still greater, because more deeply-rooted vice than that which it was meant to hide! No;" added he, walking down the room, "if he had not been a ready-made liar, he could not have been guilty of the second fault; for he would have said, 'I *cannot* go with you! because I cannot deceive my parents. I never lied to them *yet*, and I *dare* not, *will* not do so now.' But a falsehood I now believe costs him nothing, and therefore he is prepared and ripe for every other vice! O wife! misled, unhappy woman! this comes of your concealing——" Here he stopped; for his poor wife, unable to bear her own misery and his reproaches, had fallen off her chair in a fit, and for some hours even the consciousness of his son's guilt was lost in the dread of losing her.

When she was quite recovered, her affectionate husband begged her to forgive whatever he had uttered in the first transports of sorrow, that might have given her added pain; and then he listened with patience and some pleasure to her rapid and copious abuse of the wicked hussy who had no doubt corrupted her innocent child; till, glad to palliate his son's crime as much as possible, he allowed himself to be convinced that though Edwin was as much in fault in writing the letter as Mrs. Verney, still there was no doubt the seduction was entirely on her side.

"But what shall we do with this offending child?" said Austin. "You see this has changed all your plans for his future life. What can he do? Whither can he go?"

"Go!" exclaimed his mother, "Go! why this is *his home*, James Austin, and I trust it will now and *ever* be open to him!"

"Well said, my love," replied the husband. "Whatever be the crimes of a child, a parent's heart should never be shut against him, and his arms should shelter him if possible from a frowning world;—and shame and woe light on the heads of those parents who can in a criminal forget the babe whom they called into existence, and whom perhaps their want of care, and their neglect in his helpless infancy, exposed to acquire those tendencies to evil which ultimately led to ruin and to infamy! My dearest love, how could you suppose that, when I said whither is Edwin to go? I meant to forbid the poor child from coming home!"

His wife only answered by throwing her arms round his neck, and sobbing on his bosom;—whence, however, she suddenly started, and exclaimed, "How that spiteful Brograve will triumph, and throw his formal ugly son's purity in our teeth! Well, there is one advantage in being ugly, however, and young Brograve's beauty will never lead *him* into temptation!"

The next day Austin sent a letter of a few lines commanding his son home, and Edwin obeyed the summons; but no anxious father was now waiting to receive him at the inn, no mother's heart was throbbing with tumultuous joy at his expected approach; the prodigal son was indeed coming, but the fatted calf proclaimed not his welcome. Edwin did not want confidence; still he felt the moment an awful one, when he opened the well-known door and stood a convicted culprit in the presence of his parents. Though tutored by her husband, and also taught by her own sense of propriety, Mrs. Austin could scarcely forbear falling on Edwin's neck when she saw him, nor could she help whispering to herself, "He is so handsome, I don't wonder that wicked woman fell in love with him."

"Sit down, sir," said Austin with a faltering voice, while his mother involuntarily made way for him to come to the fire. "Alas!" thought Edwin, "here have I been for hours in

a cold coach, and yet my mother does not offer to get me warm stockings, or warm beer, nor does she even seem to remember I *must* be cold! O dear, O dear! they must both be very angry!"

"So you are come at last, sir?" said Austin sternly. "Alas! unhappy boy! with what different feelings did we expect you last week! and what a different welcome would have been yours! Then, all that our little fortune could afford was done to show our joy at your return, and our hearts were joyful, for we expected a dutiful, an affectionate, and a guiltless child! But now, no feast, no welcome, no rejoicing hearts await you. You come to a silent and gloomy roof, which your guilt has rendered so, and to the wretched parents whose hearts you have nearly broken!"

"Sir, sir, for God's sake spare me, sir!" cried Edwin, falling on his knees, and trembling as much with agony as cold, "and O! in mercy, pity and forgive me!"

"Rise, boy, rise, no acting for me, I must see penitence before I pronounce pardon!"

I shall leave my readers to imagine what virtuous parents so circumstanced would say to an erring but beloved child; suffice it that his mother was strenuous in laying great blame on Mrs. Verney, and his father was going to inculpate her also; when Edwin started up and with manliness and spirit above his years said, "You are welcome to blame me as severely as you choose, for in so doing you only do justice,—but I cannot, *will* not suffer you to blame her in this manner, I will not submit to be justified at her expense; for, however wrong she may have been, my guilt was at least equal to hers."

"There is heart, there is honour in that!" exclaimed Austin, and taking Edwin's hand he grasped it kindly in his.

"My dear husband!" cried Mrs. Austin eagerly, starting from her seat, "may I not kiss him now? Do let me! you see he is good yet in some things!" And as Austin smiled through tears, she threw herself on Edwin's bosom, and they wept together. When once the restraint imposed on the affections is taken off, they rush like water through a floodgate, carrying down every thing before them on their passage. A few hours saw Edwin reinstated as a welcome guest, and a beloved child—and his fond mother was rubbing his cold feet with her own warm hands in order to restore their circulation. But travelling all night in a cold winter's frost, and in great agitation of mind, had had a pernicious effect on the health of the unfortunate Edwin, and before two days were at an end he was raving in the delirium of a fever.

How utterly forgotten in this moment of agonized anxiety were the faults of the unconscious sufferer, how bitterly repented of was the repining voice, that had uttered the ungrateful sentiment,

"Why was my prayer accepted! why did Heaven
In anger hear me when I ask'd a son!"

"Let him but live! let him but be spared to us, O God of mercy! and do with him whatsoever seemeth good in thy sight," now burst from the quivering lips of both parents; and after a long struggle, the excellence of Edwin's constitution prevailed.

It was now necessary that Austin should settle on some new plan for his son, as the first had been so unhappily defeated; when, just as he was beginning to think on the subject, he received an offer of a situation in London for him, which nothing but a dread of exposing Edwin to a renewal of his acquaintance with Mrs. Verney could have made him for a moment hesitate to accept. It was from a cousin of his wife, a chemist in a very large way of business, who, wishing in a few years to retire from the fatigue of the shop, and being disappointed of his expectations to resign in favour of his son, as the youth chose to go to sea rather than settle in trade, thought he could not do better than take Edwin into partnership; and he made known his kind intentions, in a very friendly and satisfactory letter.

The utmost wishes of Austin for his son's success in life had never exceeded the prospect of a situation like this.—But if accepting it would expose the morals of Edwin to the danger he justly apprehended for him, every feeling of duty urged him to decline it. In this dilemma he wrote to Mr. Maule, stating the proposal to him, and begging to know how far he thought he should, by acceding to it, run the risk of leading Edwin again into the situation from which he had been just extricated. The answer appeared to Austin a very satisfactory one—Mr. Maule wrote word, that Mrs. Verney having formed another connexion had left her husband, and would probably, in the career of profligacy which she was running, forget Edwin entirely, or at least cease to retain any partiality for him;—and the heart of Austin being made easy by this information, he joyfully accepted the kind offer of his cousin Williams, and Edwin was told what mode of life awaited him.

When Edwin heard that he was to live in London, not only for a few years, but probably for life, his heart throbbed with tumultuous exultation — for Mrs. Verney had given him a most glowing picture of its delights, and he could not help hoping that she would introduce him into some of the attractive scenes which she had so forcibly described. But he took care not to testify all the joy which he felt, and he dwelt chiefly on the pleasure he should derive from practising, on so large a scale, a business which, under every circumstance, had been one of great interest to him—while, to do him justice, he did not at all exaggerate the satisfaction which he expressed at the assurance his parents gave him, that as he was their only object in life, and his home would therefore be

their home, it was their intention when he had become finally fixed in London to take a house near him.

At length the hour for his departure arrived, an hour which bitterly recalled that of their last parting, and was much more full of anxious alarms and fearful expectations than the former had been. He had since then been "tried in the balance, and found wanting." Besides, as temptation had found and enslaved him in the narrow circle of a provincial town; how was he likely to escape its influence when it walked abroad on the wide theatre of a metropolis!

"You will come and see us once a year," said his mother over and over again; "and my good man has promised to treat me now and then with a journey to London!" She added this in the fruitless hope of losing in the idea of the promised future the agony of the present moment. Austin, more composed, though not less miserable, exacted from his son a solemn promise not to see Mrs. Verney again, and he, *early used to habits of dissimulation and falsehood*, had no objection to give the assurance required, because he did not feel himself at all *bound* to *abide* by it.

To London he went; and at first the variety of objects which arrested and gratified his curiosity, besides the constant occupation which immediately devolved on him, drove from his mind every thought of Mrs. Verney. But one day as he passed through Cheapside, where he knew that her husband lived, he saw the name over a linen-draper's shop; and observing a servant cleaning the step of a private door, he stopped and asked whether Mrs. Verney was in London, and how she did.

"Mrs. Verney, indeed!" replied the maid, with a toss of her head—"There be none such as she here *now*."

"What! is she dead, or gone away?"

"*Dead!*—No such good luck for her husband, poor man! No—she is gone off with a fellow—a good for nothing hussy as she is—and those that like her may go after her." So saying she shut the door in his face, leaving Edwin quite as angry with Mrs. Verney as she was; for when she had talked to him of eternal love and constancy, he, poor credulous youth! had believed her, and now in a few short weeks she had gone off with another lover!—"But I see she is not worth fretting about," said Edwin to himself, and he wisely resolved to forget her as soon as possible.

Some months after, as he was walking towards the Strand, he saw a carriage stop, and a lady in a veil give her footman a message; on which the footman came up and told him his lady wished to see him. Edwin obeyed the summons, and recognised in the veiled lady his beautiful though inconstant Mrs. Verney, who was then in splendid keeping; but was not sorry, in case of a decline of her favour, to have a resource in the devoted attachment of a youth whose want of knowledge of the world would make him an easy dupe.

From that day she regained her empire over the infatuated Edwin. All the money which he could spare was expended in presents for her, and all the time he could steal from business he appropriated to clandestine visits to her apartments. At the end of a year he went down to L—— on a visit to his parents; and the first two days their easily-deceived hearts were satisfied, both with their son's expressions of unabated affection, and with the degree of pleasure he seemed to take in their society; while his mother's pride in him was greater than ever, from the excessive improvement in his person, as from the tall, awkward, though blooming boy, he was become the fine, well-proportioned, and well-dressed man.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Austin, the night of his arrival, when she retired to rest, "well—even Mr. *Brograve* must allow that our son Edwin Austin looks quite the gentleman."

"Too much so, *I* think, wife," replied he, sighing; "where did the boy get those trinkets that he wears? He ought not to buy them, and I should less like to hear that they were given to him."

These Mrs. Austin thought unnecessary scruples, unnecessary disapprobation; and much better satisfied than her husband, she fell asleep, thanking her God that her son, and *such* a son, was once more under his parental roof. But, in a day or two more, she participated in her husband's uneasiness; for Edwin was absent, restless, and evidently tired of his visit; while, as the time drew near which was to restore him to the metropolis, his eyes brightened, and his colour became more vivid.

"I wonder whether he has ever seen that woman again!" said his father to himself; "but I dare not ask the question—I dare not expose him to the temptation of lying!" Therefore Edwin departed uninterrogated.

"Well, is your fine gentleman gone?" said Brograve coming in abruptly.

"Our *son* is gone," mildly answered Austin.

"And your fine gentleman, too, for I am sure he is fine enough with his broach, and his seals, and his ring on his little finger.—A journeyman's place is a good berth enough if he can afford such things. I am sure my poor son can't, though he has a much better situation."

"There—now the murder is out!" cried Mrs. Austin. "It is all jealousy of our poor Edwin that makes you so spiteful against him?"

"Spiteful! *was* I spiteful? No, that I was not, for I did not mean to hurt you by telling you all I have heard; but now, since you provoke me, I will."

"Wife, you brought this upon yourself. But as I did not, and I wish not to be made uncomfortable, I beg, Mr. Brograve, you will

consider me, if you do not wish to spare her, and keep your bad news to yourself."

"That is very cowardly, my dear; let him say his worst, I defy him."

"Then I will speak," replied Brograve, greatly provoked; "and I tell you that it is said your son's fine things were given him by a mistress, one Mrs. Verney,—and I hear his cousin and he are not over fond of one another."

"As I know the latter part of your story to be false, Mr. Brograve," replied Austin with suppressed emotion, "I choose to believe the whole to be so; and if you please, we will change the conversation.—Wife, have you nothing for our friend's supper?" added he. And Mrs. Austin, whom consternation at the name of Verney had kept in trembling silence, was very glad to stop Brograve's mouth, even at the expense of the nicest things in her larder. But, however well his presence of mind enabled him to carry off his alarming conversation before the coarse-minded relater of it, it sunk deep into the heart of the apprehensive father, and Austin lay awake that night, vainly revolving plans for his conduct in consequence of it. At length, knowing the nature of reports, especially in a country town, and aware that scarcely a human being is able to repeat any thing exactly as it is related, they quieted their minds by a resolution to disbelieve the present information relative to Mrs. Verney, and to think it was only the former story, which, having now for the first time reached the town of L——, was confounded with a present and passing occurrence.

"And if all should not be as it ought to be," said the good man, "we shall go to London in June, and then I shall be able to remedy matters."

If Austin had wished (a revenge which his generous nature would have disdained,) to tell Brograve in return tales of his son, he had not the opportunity. Of Hugh Brograve, he scarcely knew any thing, as Brograve, afraid that Edwin would corrupt him, had forbidden him to associate with that spoiled child, as he called him, during the holidays; and as Hugh was at other times at a boarding-school at some distance, the boys were nearly strangers to each other. Consequently, Edwin could not delight his mother's ears with detailed stories of young Brograve's naughtiness; and, though she *did* know the appellation by which he was distinguished, she was too full of feeling, and too generous, to wound a parent's ear by such a communication.

As I do not wish to leave my principal characters in order to dwell on any thing relative to the subordinate ones, I shall content myself with giving one instance of the bad results of Brograve's system, and of his obstinacy in believing that such results could not take place. When Hugh Brograve was seventeen, and Edwin Austin fifteen years old, both the boys were invited to join a party from L—— to a fair some miles off, and Edwin's parents, ever prone to gratify their son, consented to his going; but Brograve, as prone to thwart Hugh, at once peremptorily forbade him to go. Before the day arrived, however, Austin learnt that the fair was likely to be a scene of riot and drunkenness; he, therefore, though Edwin, as we have seen before, was very fond of such places, insisted on his staying at home, promising him some other frolic instead, of a less pernicious nature; and Edwin, well knowing that his father would amply reward him for the enforced privation, obeyed with a good grace.

Not so Hugh Brograve. Accustomed to enjoy clandestinely what openly he dared not, he pretended to have so bad a pain of his face and head, putting something in his cheek to swell it out as if inflated by pain, that his father himself advised him to apply a poultice, and go to bed as early as possible; and Hugh, locking himself in his room, and desiring not to be disturbed on any account, got out of the back window as soon as he heard his father go out of the front door,—whence, having a horse ready, he galloped off to the fair, where he spent the night; and, having bribed the servant, was in bed again time enough to answer his father's inquiry of, "Well, Hugh! how is your face this morning?"

But the "little blackguard" had been so very riotous, and so very comical, that he had attracted a great deal of attention; and as he had, when half-drunk, boasted of the trick he had played his father, his exploit became much talked of by those who knew, or who hated Brograve; and amongst the rest it reached the ears of the Austins. But pity for Hugh, and a feeling of generous pride, forbade them to copy the coarseness which they blamed, by naming the affair to the deceived father, when he, a day or two after it had been told to them by Edwin, paid them a visit.

Brograve had heard so much of the riotous and disgusting scenes which had taken place at the fair, that he came brimful of indignation against the magistrates for suffering such meetings—"My son," added he, "was asked to join a party thither; but I was too wise to let him go. I suppose *yours* went of course, as he loves a frolic, and you never deny him any thing!"

"My son was not there," replied Austin; "I disapproved his going, and he staid willingly at home."

"Willingly!—that must have been acting—and I dare say he was there unknown to you."

"No, indeed," replied Mrs. Austin, thrown off her guard by this provoking charge, "he was with us till midnight—and *our* son, I assure you, is not *given* to such hypocritical ways. We leave them to *your* son; *he* cer-

tainly *was* there, and could therefore inform you that Edwin was *not*."

Rage and astonishment deprived Brograve at first of the power of utterance; but recovering himself, he exclaimed with an oath, "that it was an infernal falsehood, for that his son went to bed with a swelled face at six that evening." And Mrs. Austin was going to relate how he made the swelling, and to give the particulars related by Hugh while drunk; when a look from her husband checked her, and she only said,—"I have merely related what I heard."

"And from whom?"

"From Edwin."

"From Edwin!" he replied, with a sneer; then, snapping his fingers, "I don't care that for the information;" and seeing Hugh go past,—"But there he goes," he exclaimed, "and he shall come and confront his accuser."

Accordingly he did call him in, and then desired Edwin to repeat his charge before his face. Edwin was, however, too kind to give a detail which he thought even Brograve could not believe wholly unfounded in truth; he therefore simply told Hugh he had heard he had been at the fair unknown to his father, and that his mother had repeated what he said to Mr. Brograve.

Hugh, knowing his father's implicit confidence in the efficacy of his plan of education, and that he would not believe him guilty on any evidence but that of his own senses, took courage, and with all the well-feigned indignation of injured innocence inveighed against the cruelty of those who had thus aspersed him; adding to the severe physical pain he had experienced, the moral one of being accused of a degree of baseness and duplicity which his soul abhorred, and which the excellent education he had received made him incapable of.

"Well said, my grateful and good fellow," vociferated his father. "I knew it was all a lie—and I would forfeit my right hand for my son's rectitude of conduct at any time." While Austin equally deceived, for he could not believe a youth of seventeen could be so thorough a hypocrite, joined Brograve in inveighing against slanders, and reproved Edwin for repeating gossip tales. But his wife and son, taught by their own conscious experience that such hypocrisy was very possible at any age, kept silence, and believed him guilty still.

June came, and they went to London; and Edwin seemed to be so attentive to business, and his cousin so well pleased with him, that the father dismissed his fears,—and the mother gave herself up entirely to new and pleasurable sensations—declaring that to see London sights, and to be shown them by her son, was one of the greatest enjoyments she had ever known, or could conceive of. But before the visit ended Austin thought he discovered that his cousin had two manners towards Edwin,—a cordial one whenever he was present and observing him, and a cold reserved one when he fancied the father's eyes were not upon him. But when he mentioned his suspicions to his wife, she laughed them to scorn, attributing them to the over-watchfulness of an anxious parent; and Austin, glad, perhaps, of an excuse not to inquire too closely, professed his belief that she was right in all probability; and he returned home satisfied with his visit, with his cousin, and his son.

A second and a third year passed away without any material occurrence or change taking place, and Edwin's prospects appeared the same as usual, in spite of Brograve's hints that all was not going on well at the chemist's in London, and of an assurance from him a few days after, that he had heard from undeniable authority that Edwin was suspected of having robbed the till, and that lavender-water and other perfumes were in the habit of vanishing very fast in, it was supposed, presents to a certain lady. This charge against the honesty of his child, which Austin believed to be unimpeached, he heard with contempt and indignation. But his poor wife, recollecting the transaction of the purse, did not inveigh against the falsehood of the report with the same eager and unforced resentment which he did; and *her* night after this conversation was much more restless and sleepless than her husband's. A few days after came a letter from Mr. Williams, accompanied by one from Edwin, which to a suspicious nature, as Austin's was now become relative to Edwin, served only too forcibly to corroborate the truth of Brograve's statement. Mr. Williams simply, though guardedly said, that finding his cousin Edwin on a trial of three years disliked the business, which aversion on his part had occasioned some quarrels between them, he had offered to give him up the rest of his time; and that this offer, subject to the approbation of his parents, Edwin had gladly accepted.

Edwin's letter said much the same; with this addition, that having found his cousin Williams on acquaintance a very suspicious and close temper, he wished to go into a counting-house rather than remain with him; and having heard of such a situation, he only waited for his father's consent to give his answer.

It was a long time before the anxious and disappointed parents could make up their minds what answer to send to Edwin; but at length poor Austin exclaimed, "At least he shall not have it to say that I thwarted his inclinations, and forced him to be what he did not like." Accordingly he wrote to Edwin, acquiescing, though with pain, in his change of business, and begging to know the name of the kind friend who had engaged to procure him the place in the counting-house.

The fact was, as Brograve had stated; Ed-

win had only too often taken money from the till, always meaning, as he said, to return it when he could. And at first, perhaps he *did* repay it as soon as he got money. But "ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute," says the French proverb; and having only too often found in early life the impunity of guilt, he persisted in his depredations on the money and the perfumes, which were all given to Mrs. Verney, and so profusely that Mr. Williams took alarm, and charged him with the thefts just before his unsuspecting parents came to London.

But Edwin when taxed with his fault, was so undauntedly firm in his denial, so ready with a plausible excuse for the deficiencies Mr. Williams observed, that the latter, who had great confidence in him, tried to believe he had accused him unjustly, though he resolved to watch him narrowly in future; and as the Austins were every day expected, he wished at least to defer any more examinations of Edwin till they were come and gone. For some time Edwin, being on his guard, ceased to commit the crime imputed to him; but, when Mrs. Verney became distressed for money, he, on promise of speedy payment, like another Barnwell, again defrauded his indulgent master for another Millwood. Mr. Williams having now detected him most clearly by means not worth relating, he told him he would no longer keep him in his house; but that as he was a relation he would not expose him nor would he afflict his excellent parents by a knowledge of his guilt. Accordingly he wrote the letter before alluded to; and one of Mrs. Verney's lovers having at her instigation procured Edwin the place of clerk in his uncle's counting-house, he was able to attribute his pretended wish to leave his cousin, to the prospect of a situation which he preferred. By return of post Edwin answered his father's questions, stating with truth the name of the gentleman who had been his friend, and the name of his employer; a name well known on 'Change. It was so much for the interest of his happiness that Austin should be deceived, that he was so; and he taught himself and his wife not only to look on Brograve's information as mere calumnious gossip, but to think his cousin Williams' letter was the truth, and the *whole* truth. In the meanwhile Edwin went to his new employment, with which in all his letters he expressed himself delighted, and well he might, for such was the plausibility of his manners that he soon conciliated the regard and obtained the confidence of his superiors; and he had not been in the house more than a year when he communicated to his father the welcome intelligence, that the head of the firm had bidden him, if he continued to be what he then was, look forward to being one day perhaps received as a partner. How welcome to his father's heart was this intelligence! how gratifying to the affectionate pride of his mother! not only because they had now reason to suppose their son was likely to make his fortune, but because it was a testimony to his industry and good conduct; and when soon after he had written this letter he obtained leave to pay them a visit, the second which they had had from him in the course of the year, as they were both too unwell to venture on a journey to London again, never had they welcomed him with more fondness, and never had he seemed more worthy of such a welcome. In vain did Brograve, after Edwin was gone, assure the Austins that their son was met on the road by a lady in a post-chaise, with whom he drove off, and not on the London road. They gave no credit to the tale, though it was very true that Mrs. Verney, having on speculation followed an officer to his country quarters which were near the town of ——, Edwin had promised to rob his parents of a day or two to devote to her.

The next year, Edwin came again, and whether it was that, conscious how miserable his father and mother would be if they suspected the conduct he was in reality pursuing, he felt himself impelled by remorseful tenderness to pay them all the affectionate attention in his power, or whether he was impressed with a sort of foreboding consciousness that he might meet with an untimely fate, and never behold them more,—it is certain that in filial love, and all those delicate attentions which mark a heart deeply impressed with feelings of respect and duty, Edwin had never shone so amiably conspicuous as he did in this last visit to L——; and had not the old man caught him, as he imagined, in some evident evasions, some alarming disingenuousness, all anxiety would have been lost in parental pride and well-founded hope.

Some few months after this last visit, Austin observed that Edwin's letters were not so clearly expressed as usual, and that his handwriting bore evident marks of agitation. He happened at this time to receive a letter from Mr. Maule, in which that gentleman told him, that his wife's sister, having gone from keeper to keeper, was now completely lost in the lowest stage of profligacy, and would soon, he expected, be reduced to poverty, rags, and an untimely death.

"If," cried Austin, clasping his hands with agony, "if this woman's wretched state should have any thing to do with my son's altered style and trembling hand!" and he could not banish the idea from his mind again. Nor, as the incoherency of his letters increased, could he refrain from mentioning to Edwin his conviction that something weighed upon his mind,—conjuring him at the same time, if his suspicions were just, to have the courage to confide in his *best friends*, his only *true* friends, the parents who lived *for* and *in* him, and promising him unlimited pardon and as-

sistance also, to the utmost of their power, could they but *serve* and *save* him.

To this letter, blotted with tears of parental affection and dictated by its warmest feelings, they received no answer.

The next day Brograve called on them in the afternoon, and Austin absolutely started at sight of him, fearing that he came to communicate no pleasant tidings. But though he looked full of meaning, and observed them with the most scrutinizing attention, he only talked of indifferent things, and never mentioned Edwin. Yet still, something seemed every now and then on his lip, which he hastily and almost with a tear in his eye suppressed; while his manner seemed so unusually gentle and even affectionate, that Austin's fears became almost insupportable, and his unwonted kindness alarmed him even more than his usual brutality had done.—Indeed the news which he had heard, and which he saw by their manner had not yet reached their ears and their *hearts*, was of a nature too shocking even for him to endure to be the first communicator of it;—till unable to keep silence, yet still more unable to break it, he wrung Austin's hand with affectionate energy, and bidding him good night in a faltering tone, he ran out of the house.

"What can this mean?" murmured Austin, wiping from his brow the damps which terror had gathered there.

"I never saw Mr. Brograve so moved, and so low," observed Mrs. Austin.

"And is that all you saw in him?" asked her more quick-sighted husband.

"Yes—what was there else to see?"

"O wife! wife! dear, unsuspicious being!" exclaimed Austin, "it will be an age till tomorrow's post comes in!" And Mrs. Austin, when informed of what he augured from Brograve's unusual manners, ridiculed his fears as those of a nervous man.

The anxiously expected post came in, only too soon for the unhappy parents; for it brought the following letter from Mr. Williams:

"Sorry indeed am I, my much-esteemed relatives, to be forced to tell you such terrible news of your unhappy and infatuated son! He has absconded, to save his life." ("He *lives* then!" screamed out his mother, "and that 's something;" while his father, scarcely able to think his life, with loss of his honour, worth preserving, shook his head mournfully, and proceeded with the letter, which his wife read over his shoulder.) "The fact is, that madly devoted to a wicked woman, a Mrs. Verney, he has, to save her from a jail, made free with some money entrusted to his care; and having sold India bonds to a considerable amount, he is suspected of having endeavoured to set fire to the premises in order to conceal his theft by destroying the remaining bonds and papers. The combustible matter was however discovered just in time, and your son and the wretched woman escaped together. However, such a reward is offered for his apprehension as an *incendiary*, and such an accurate description of his person and dress is posted up in large letters on the walls *here*, and is sent to every principal town in the kingdom, that I dare not bid you expect he will escape being seized."

Long before he read to the end of this dreadful letter, the wretched father had ceased to see, petrified and almost senseless from this overwhelming stroke; and his more wretched because self-upbraiding wife had fallen, unperceived by him, deprived of sense on the floor.—At length, however, a deep groan roused him from his trance, and looking round, the prostrate form and death-like cheek of his beloved companion met his view, and restored him to himself.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, "I have yet one being left to love, and live for; ay, and for whose sake I must learn to be calm and patient." Then lifting her up, he took her in his arms, laid her gently on her bed, and when she recovered she found her head reposing on the bosom of her husband.

"I am spared to you still, remember," said he, "and you to me; therefore we are not destitute, and for each other's sake we must meet and bear our hard fate with fortitude and resignation."

"*You* may," she answered, "for you have nothing to blame yourself for;—I have,—and it weighs *here* like a mountain of earth," she wildly exclaimed, laying her hand on her heart.

"What weighs there, my beloved?—Nothing ought to do so, I am sure; and these are only the suggestions of a too tender conscience."

His wife tried to speak, but emotion choked her; and it was hours before the poor soul could unburthen her mind by telling her husband of the circumstance of the usher's purse, and the early but striking proof of a tendency to dishonesty which she had, lest he should punish Edwin, concealed from his father. A deep sigh was at first Austin's only answer; but at length he bade *her* be consoled by what consoled *him*, namely, that she had *meant* well; and the rest was in the hands of a wise and benevolent Being, who would judge the *motives* as well as the *results* of actions.

Oh! what a night of misery was passed by these unhappy parents! Towards morning they fell into a perturbed sleep, from which they gradually awoke to consciousness. But when the whole of that consciousness burst upon them,—when instead of praying for their son, which they always did on waking, as their pride and their support, they now beheld

him in idea as the shame and the disgrace of their being, and could scarcely dare to pray that he might escape the death due to his misdeeds,—they loathed the light of the sun, and wished their creator would deign to take them to his presence and his mercy.

The post that afternoon brought them a letter from Edwin, the direction of which was in a disguised hand; the postmark was London. It was as follows: "How shall I dare to address you, most wronged of parents!—Inconsistent, incoherent, did you call my letters? Well they might be so! But you will know *why* only too soon! Expect never to see me more! unless I am taken: and then I trust that, before I shall undergo the sentence of the law, you will deign to come and pronounce my pardon.—But taken I shall not be, I believe—and for *your sakes* I hope that *your son*, pure and virtuous beings, will not disgrace you by dying on a scaffold, though for myself I care not. O dear, indulgent, tender mother! how I feel for your sufferings! I was so much your *pride!*—Well, well—it is all over now—the die is cast—farewell!—farewell!—and if possible *forget me!* Yet one word more; do not reproach yourselves, *pray* don't, for letting me go to London. If you had not consented, I should have gone nevertheless; for I was bent on going, and also on seeing HER again.—So don't blame yourselves.—O God! to think that I must never see you again!—Farewell!

"Once more—I resume—How truly you said, 'you were my only friends, my only true friends, and you alone lived *for* and *in* me!' But *do* live, I charge you! don't curse me by dying.—I forgot—you are good people, and will live out your appointed time, come what may. But what was I saying?—O that you were indeed my only friends!—for she, even *she*—but no matter—Oh! I am a wild and desperate man!—yes, a man without a name—."

What a letter for such parents to receive from a son who was dearer to them than life itself! Still, it spoke a heart not absolutely callous, and feelings not absolutely depraved.

"If he can but escape to America," cried Austin, "all may be well yet;—and if he should settle and do well there, who knows but we may go over, and end our old days with him!"

As the darkest cloud produces the brightest lightning, so it is a wise provision in our nature, that the deepest misery should often produce the brightest beam of hope;—else life must often sink under the pressure of unexpected calamity; but Hope, like a guardian angel, hovers near, and at least *suspends* if it cannot *remove* the suffocating pressure.

During the first days of their distress the Austins received *no one*, but shut up their shop, and closed all their windows to the street. "When I shall venture to walk out again I know not!" said Austin; for he dreaded to see the advertisement respecting his son on the wall; "But we will see our friends,—for you know, my love, none but *real* friends would call on us now;—however, as our parish church is very near us, and we can go without running any risk of——I mean without being forced to go through any streets, we had better show ourselves there next Sunday, and then those who like will call."

"Church! Oh! no, no, I dare not, cannot go to church, James! indeed I can't. To have people staring at us, and perhaps looking disdainfully at us on account of our lost son;—ay, even those who used to speak so prettily!"

"Woman!" replied her husband, "whom need you mind, whom need you fear, while in the temple, and the presence, as it were, of your creator!—that God who is said to love those whom he chasteneth; that God in whose eyes all on earth are equal, and in comparison with whom the best of us are frail, the wisest foolish!" And Mrs. Austin, after a struggle with herself, consented to go to church next Sunday. How violent and sudden grief alters all, save the young! Austin's hair was rendered by some days of suffering entirely white, though only partly coloured before; and both he and his wife, though scarcely to be called old, seemed since their sorrows to be advanced at least ten years in age.

When Sunday came, Mrs. Austin's heart again failed her; and she dreaded to encounter the eye of scorn and neglect. "And whom would it disgrace?" cried Austin, "the scorners or the scorned? Why, even Brograve, you see, was awed into respect by our 'great griefs' the other day."

"True, very true," replied she; and was cheered by that recollection.

Like all fearful, nervous persons, poor Mrs. Austin contrived to increase her difficulties by shrinking from encountering them; and she was so long before she could prevail on herself to set off for church, that the congregation was assembled, and the clergyman was entering the desk, when the trembling couple, exhibiting, as Sterne calls it, the venerable presence of misery, slowly walked up the aisle, and tottering into their pew, were glad to hide their disordered countenances in the act of preparatory prayer. Mistaken woman! to expect scorn and neglect! Our miseries, ay even our disgraces, are soon forgiven us; it is our *prosperities* that are difficult to forgive. There was scarcely an eye but turned with encouraging kindness on these sufferers under undeserved calamity, and mere acquaintances prepared for them the greetings of friends.

One of the lessons for the day happened to be the forty-fifth chapter of Genesis, and the voice of the reader was observed to falter several times while reading the concluding verses; for a suppressed sob at intervals reached his ears from the attentive mother of

Edwin, and when he pronounced "And Israel said, It is enough—Joseph, my son, is yet alive—I will go and see him before I die!" the sob became so audible that he was glad his task of reading was ended.

"James! James!" whispered Mrs. Austin, "remember what you said about America! I was thinking of that." When service was over, the clergyman, who correctly practised the precepts of that gospel which he preached, gave the Austins such a kind and respectful bow as he passed down the aisle, that others, if they had not been disposed to do so before, would have done it in order to follow his example;—for he was a country gentleman, and a man of great influence and fortune, as well as a clergyman. As soon as this gentleman, (Mr. Heberden,) had taken off his robes, he returned up the aisle, to walk down it with the Austins, hoping by that means to keep off from them a number of persons, who might by well-meant but officious civility overset the evidently weak spirits of the afflicted mother. To the truly benevolent of both sexes, these sort of thoughtful courtesies and attentions are known as it were intuitively, and Mr. Heberden had the satisfaction of seeing that his kindness succeeded. Besides, Mrs. Austin felt her consequence increased by his presence; and when at the church door he invited himself to drink tea with them that afternoon, she was able with tolerable composure to tell him they would be glad to see him. He came; and, as might be expected from such a visiter, he spoke comfort to their troubled souls, as oil thrown on the rough waters soothes them to a calm. He read their son's letter—dwelt most on the good parts of it, and the proofs of strong compunction which it evinced; and finding how much they loved to hope that he could escape to America, and they ultimately join him there, he said as much as truth warranted to confirm their hopes. And certain it is, that the calmness and fortitude which were from this day forward visible in both these sufferers, was owing to the piety and kindness of this admirable man. Such is the duty, and such the soothing power, of the truly conscientious preacher of the doctrines of peace!

Austin now forced himself into his shop as usual, and even tolerated as much as ever the visits of Brograve; who, though he was as forbearing as he was capable of being, could not help now and then talking of spoiled children, and their never turning out well,—congratulating himself on the excellent method in which he had brought up his son.

Affliction had so humbled and subdued Mrs. Austin, that she could now endure these vain boastings without saying a word in reply; and Austin felt that to resent them would be beneath him. He had however only too soon the means of revenge in his power, and he took advantage of it—but it was the revenge of a man and a CHRISTIAN. Brograve's son had always trembled in his presence, and his father's frown was as terrible to him almost as death itself. It was also true that Brograve, afraid of allowing him much, lest he should teach him to be extravagant, ran into a contrary extreme, and really did not allow him enough to enable him to support the appearance of a gentleman. The consequence was, that Hugh ran in debt as long as his credit lasted; when finding himself involved beyond the power of extricating himself, and not daring to confess his faults to his father in order to ask relief from him, he had in a fatal hour recourse to forgery; and having drawn a bill for a considerable amount in the name of his employer on a certain bank, he received the money, and paid many of his debts with it before the fraud was detected. When it was, he had, luckily for him, intimation of the discovery time enough to set sail for America with the remainder of the sum.

"So!" cried Mrs. Austin, when she heard this intelligence, "this is the end of all his boasting, is it! Well—I don't see but your wise parents are as badly off as your foolish ones, for *my* part. But he is afflicted now, poor man, and I am heartily sorry for him, for I know only too well how to feel for his sorrow—and if I did not fear he would think I came to insult him, I would go and call on him!"

"That's a good woman," replied Austin affectionately, "and the last part of your speech has made up for the first; you are right—he would think you came to insult him; and as a woman ought not to risk the brutality of such a man, you shall *not* go to him—but I *will;* for I had rather he should tell me I took the trouble of coming merely to triumph in his misery, than that he should be able to say, what he would say if I did *not* call, namely, that I despised him too much to come near him; there is no being on one's guard against tempers of that sort; all therefore one has to do is, to act *right* towards such persons, regardless of the consequences." Accordingly, forgetting all his faults in his misfortunes, the truly christian and benevolent Austin set off for the house of Brograve. He saw Austin coming, and as he drew nigh he shut the door in his face, exclaiming, "There—I knew you would—I knew you would come to insult and triumph over me; but you shall not come in."

"Let me speak to you," said Austin through the window, "answer me honestly; If I had *not* come; should you not have said, 'There! I knew he would not come, he despises me too much?' "

"Very likely I should," replied Brograve surlily.

"But as I *am* come, suppose you are so kind as to take my visit as it was meant, and receive me as one whom fate has fitted to sympathize most tenderly and truly with you by

afflicting me in a like manner to yourself, and give your feelings the comfort of a companion and a soother like me—let us, brothers in affliction, be a support to each other!"

Brograve was not proof against this address, and his door and even his heart were opened to him immediately.

"Well,—now you are here," said Brograve, "perhaps you can decide a question which puzzles me,—namely, which is the greater rascal, your son or mine?"

"That must depend," replied Austin, after a pause, and making an effort to subdue the pain occasioned him by this abrupt and coarse question, "that must depend on the comparative degree of temptation which each underwent; and on the degree of their penitence."

"Penitence! Yes,—my son has a fine notion of penitence indeed! Yours at least is a civil-spoken rascal,—but what do you think of mine? There's a letter for you!" said he, giving Austin a letter from his son. It was indeed a terrible letter; for it reproached his father with his avarice, and the terror he had excited in him,—imputing to his mean allowance his temptation to run in debt, and to his parental tyranny the fear that prevented him from applying to him as a friend and father; and ended by assuring him that he considered him as the cause of, and therefore as responsible for, all his crimes.

"At least my son did not write me such a letter as that," said Austin proudly.

"And therefore," cried Brograve, "I am willing to admit he is the lesser rascal of the two."

My readers will not be surprised to hear that this similarity in suffering endeared to Austin and his wife the once disagreeable society of Brograve, and that he was never so easy as when he was with them. Misfortune had indeed a salutary effect on him; and till he had thus fatally lost the society of his son, a father's feelings had never been fully awakened in his bosom; now, he pined after that child, whom his own tyranny had alienated; and though almost reduced to a mere pittance by his son's debts, which his rigid honesty had made him pay to the uttermost farthing, he longed to see him to pronounce his pardon,—and, could he have afforded it, would have followed him to America. But he could not go without carrying with him the means of subsistence, and to do that he was incapable. Nor could Austin assist him; for he had insisted on knowing the amount of the sums of which Edwin had defrauded both Mr. Williams and his last employer; and having paid the latter with great inconvenience to himself, he was forced to be contented with paying the other by instalments.

But Brograve was an object of *envy* to the Austins; for he knew that his son was safely landed in America, as a letter had been received from him. But it was certain that Edwin, even if he had sailed for that country, was not arrived,—because, if he had, he would immediately have written to his parents.—Therefore the unhappy Austins could only picture Edwin to their imaginations as skulking about some part of the United Kingdom, a disgraced and trembling outcast, a reward set upon his life, and his only prospect an ignominious death; for though the money which he had stolen had been paid by his father, the prosecutor, being well convinced of his guilt, would not, or could not, give up his design of trying to make an example of him as an incendiary.

A circumstance now took place which called the feelings of the susceptible Austins into as keen, if not keener, agony than they had as yet experienced, though the circumstance itself was of a most pleasurable nature. They were one day surprised by a visit from a gentleman who was an utter stranger to them, and who, announcing himself to be an attorney, said he was come to communicate to them the contents of a will. This gentleman was a man of benevolent feelings; and seeing in the countenances of both an expression of deep-rooted care, and observing the now denuded state of the house, (for they had sold all the furniture which they did not absolutely want,) he flattered himself that pecuniary embarrassments had occasioned their evident dejection; he therefore felt his voice choked, and his utterance impeded, by kind and agreeable emotion, while he prepared to read to them the contents of the parchment which he took out of his pocket. But at length, shaking off his feelings, he read with a firm voice, expecting to be interrupted every moment by exclamations of joyful surprise, that "Joshua Snelling, &c. gave and bequeathed to James Austin, the son of his first cousin, the sum of twenty thousand pounds, and a house and garden in Kent, besides plate and furniture." *Surprise* he did indeed behold, but no *joy;* and when he had ended, he saw the legatee clasp his hands together with the close convulsive grasp of agony, while sobbing as if her heart would burst, his agitated wife hid her face on the shoulder of her husband.

"What can this mean?" exclaimed the attorney at last, after a pause of pity and astonishment; "I hoped I came to give you joy—and it seems that the good news I bring has only served to distress you!"

"It ought not, sir; but in these first moments it does; for joy, I fear, *our* hearts can never know more," replied Austin, in a faltering tone. "But this is, I know, sir, a wrong feeling, and an ungrateful one to the Being, who has thus filled us with good things, especially as, though not happy ourselves, it will be a great privilege to contribute to make others so. Come, my dear wife! cheer up, and look our good fortune bonnily in the face!" On which Mrs. Austin suddenly ex-

claiming, "If he should be safe abroad, husband, we may follow, and all be rich together!" wiped her eyes, adjusted her cap, and begged the gentleman to drink a glass of wine, and make himself comfortable while he stayed. In a few minutes Austin had hinted enough of his sad story to affect and interest his auditor; who, having given his address, and discussed every necessary point, thought it right to leave the Austins to the unrestrained indulgence of their feelings; but when he bade them farewell, he desired Austin not to scruple to employ him in any way that could be serviceable to him or his son.

Mixed and overpowering indeed were the feelings which he left them to indulge! and for a while, the regret that this fortune did not come years ago, and soon enough to have given Edwin other prospects in life, swallowed up the sensation of thankfulness for its having come at last; but more proper emotions succeeded, and the evening was cheered by the whispers of consoling hope and the aspirations of pious gratitude.

"Well," said Austin, the next morning when he rose, "my wealth will be of use to poor Brograve, however; for I will pay his outfit to America, and lend him money for all his purposes." Nor was it long before the now even affectionate Brograve, assisted by the liberal aid of Austin, set sail for America. The latter had first obtained a solemn promise from him, that he would not reproach his son when he saw him; but as severity had failed, try what kindness would do—"And be sure," added he, "if you meet with my poor boy, or hear any thing of him; tell him we are become rich, and long to follow him, and share our plenty with him!"—"Tell him," added Mrs. Austin, "that we have no joy in our riches, till he shares them with us!" And Brograve, more moved than ever he was in his life, wrung their hands in silence, and left them with a full and aching heart.

Would that Edwin had been so fortunate as to escape to America! would that an affectionate father had been hastening to him! but he, obliged to hide himself from the keen eye of justice, and not daring to attempt to get on board any vessel, was wandering over Ireland, over Scotland, and over England, associating with the wicked and the idle, and sinking consequently every day still lower in the scale of creation; while he sought to drown the sense of misery in drunkenness,—misery increased by the desertion and narrowly escaped treachery of the woman who had been his seducer and his ruin. Yes; wandering thus amongst ruffians and wearing the disguise of one, under a feigned name, and every trace of his former self obscured, exposed to all the blasts of wintry nights, and hiding during the day in lone unwholesome dwellings, was he whose birth was hailed with the warmest parental rapture, whose infancy was reared upon a mother's bosom, and whose welfare, from the first hour of his existence to the present agonizing one of his shame and his wickedness, was the first object of a father's care, a father's prayers!

But though Hugh Brograve was indeed so fortunate as to reach America in safety; as change of place does not produce change of mind, he was in the New World just what he had been in the Old; and having joined a set of very notorious men, he was stabbed in a drunken frolic, just before his unhappy father landed; and was dying of a mortification, which rapidly came on, when his too late repentant father sought him out, and appeared unexpectedly at his bed-side. In vain did the afflicted old man hang over his pillow with agonizing affection. The vindictive Hugh loaded him with reproaches, imputing his crimes and even his untimely death to his parental severity and pernicious system of education, and died with expressions of the same unrelenting anger on his lips;—and the wretched father returned to England childless, poor, and almost broken-hearted.

But to return to the Austins—Though they occasionally *suspected* the life Edwin must be leading, they were not *sure* of it, and it was necessary they should *hope* in order to *exist*. They therefore *did* hope,—though they well knew that had their son any good tidings of himself to impart, he would have written immediately. They felt sensibly indeed the loss of Brograve's society, so powerful is the tie of sympathy, so endearing is equality in any thing!

"What say you, wife," said Austin, after the legacy tax was paid and he had received the first dividends of his fortune; "what say you to paying a visit to our house in Kent?—And suppose as change of scene and new occupations are of use, it is said, to the sorrowful; suppose, I say, that we go and live there entirely? We do not want to keep shop now, we have so good a fortune, and our neighbour's son Ralph would be very glad to take it, as the lad wants a business, and has a wife in his eye."

"I should like it of all things," said Mrs. Austin; "and if we do not approve of our new house, we can come back again. But somehow, since our poor child's misconduct, I have never been able to look our friends here in the face as I used to do—and I shall not be sorry, therefore, to change my abode. Besides, if we altered our way of living here, people would say we were grown proud."

"Yes," observed Austin, "and if we did not, they would say we were mean—so we had better go at once."

"I am glad you think so, my dear; for though to be sure I can never be a lady, still I know I have a generous spirit, and if I am visited I will have a good table."

"That you will, I am sure," cried Austin;

"and I am glad for your sake that my relation, though he never noticed me during his life, did so handsomely by me at his death."

Austin immediately settled his affairs at L——, departed for Kent, followed by regrets from his acquaintance and friends, and blessings from the poor, and in a few weeks was settled in a very pretty house on Blackheath, surrounded by a large garden. With that propriety which always accompanies good sense in every situation of life, Austin resolved to have every thing necessary for comfort, and nothing for show. Their establishment therefore consisted only of two maid-servants, and a gardener who did not sleep in the house, but in a cottage adjoining; and he kept a low chaise with one horse, in which he could with safety drive his wife round the beautiful country surrounding them; resolving in the summer time to keep a saddle horse for himself besides—if he could do so on trial, consistent with his resolution to set apart such a sum yearly for charitable purposes. Mrs. Austin had certainly not been so happy since her misfortunes as she now was; for she had constant and pleasant occupation in arranging her new house, and could she but hope to live to see Edwin in it, she should have nothing more to desire! Austin too had his enjoyments; he was fond of a garden, and he had now a very excellent one; — he liked old china too, and his cupboards were full of it; — old plate he had also in abundance, and so much more than they wanted, that he wished to sell part of it; — but his wife had not yet done looking at and admiring it—nor as yet, since winter was not quite set in, were her fears of robbers sufficient to induce her to consent to the removal of the chest to the safer protection of their banker in London.

Whoever has travelled in stage-coaches of any description must have observed the excessive and unconquerable taciturnity of some of the passengers, and the unconquerable garrulity and communicativeness of others; and "Whose house is that, sir?" has been often answered by a torrent of unnecessary and tedious information relative to the parties residing in it. As Austin was getting out of his gig at his own door while a stage-coach was passing, one of the passengers said, "What a pretty house that is! and though lonely, what a lovely situation!"

"Yes, madam, it is," replied a communicative traveller, "and that old man you see at the door is its owner. He was, I am told, a shopkeeper somewhere, when Mr. Snelling, his distant relation, died, and left him, besides a handsome fortune, that house and garden, with plate, furniture, and so forth! There was a lucky man, madam!"

"He was, indeed, sir; and I hope he will have the spirit to spend his money, now he has gotten it!"

"Why, madam, he is no dasher. I waited on him on a little business the other day; and if his wife had not been at home I should not have known half what he had gotten by his relation's will. But she showed me a great chestfull of beautiful old plate, and such fine old china! but some of the plate they are going to sell soon; and indeed I advised their moving it all; for it really is not safe in such a place to have so much valuable matter in the house."

"Very true, sir," said the lady, and began a long story of house-breakers, and the danger of a friend of hers; which story was answered by one of a similar kind by the gentleman; while apparently half if not quite asleep in the corner sat a middle-aged man, wrapped up in a great-coat, who had seemed all the time totally uninterested in the conversation that was going forward. This person, when they were on the middle of the heath, desired to be set down; and as he got out, he wished his fellow-passengers a good evening, though in an uncourteous tone; and the lady meeting, as he spoke, a glance from his dark eyes, which was not certainly of an admiring nature, she declared, when he was gone, that she did not like his looks, and was very glad they had got rid of him. Alas! the lady happened to be more right than such hasty physiognomists commonly are.

The preceding week, Austin had driven his wife to London, where she had made many purchases; and ever since her return he had seen her very busy at her needle, while sometimes he had surprised her weeping over her work. There was a time in the year when he had seen her thus before, and his own feelings gave him a clue to hers; but he said nothing, and took no notice of her emotion.

The day after the conversation in the stage-coach took place was passed by both parents in evident dejection and silent abstraction, except when one of them made an effort to talk, in order to conceal agitation, or to endeavour to amuse the other. The dinner was as usual, with the single addition of a *favourite dish of Edwin's;* but the meal was scarcely *tasted*, and certainly not *enjoyed.*

In the evening, Austin drew his chair closer to his wife's, and holding her hand in his, while he rested his right foot on the fender,— "My dear wife," said he, "we are very silly people, and needlessly, I suspect, increase our own miseries, by hiding in our bosoms what, if shared, would be less painful. I know that I have been going about all day with a consciousness which it would have lightened my heart much to mention to you."

"And I am conscious of the same," replied Mrs. Austin bursting into tears; "but I feared to afflict you by reminding you that this is our poor boy's birthday."

"And I you," said Austin in a faltering voice; "but I did not forget it, nor have I indeed ever forgotten it."

"Neither have I, husband; and perhaps you will *laugh* at me, but I must tell you;—I always, you know, used to make something for him, or buy him a present on his birthday; and I have done the same ever since we lost him. Last year I made him new shirts; this year I made him some neckcloths, but finer than ever,—the finest I could get, in honour of our new riches. See here, James! what handsome ones they are!" (taking one out of her work-drawer.) Austin certainly did not laugh, and at first he could not speak.

"My love," said he at length, "and truly the wife of my heart, I should hardly laugh at a proof of tenderness which, if it be a weakness, I have been guilty of myself; for *I* too have always remembered our poor child's birthday, and, as usual, bought him a present. Last year I bought him books; this year I was tempted by this gold watch and chain, (giving it into her hand,) that he may know, whatever he may have deserved from us, I never even in the midst of his errors forgot he was my child, and a most dear one too!" Here a pause of strong emotion succeeded, and the glittering gift was laid on the table again, dimmed with a mother's tears.

To this mournful silence succeeded the usual soothing topics of hopes to come, of repentance in Edwin, of reunion with him in another country, or, if not, certainly in another world.

Alas! how different at that moment were the feelings and the prospects of the ill-fated Edwin! Those affections which formed the only solace of his parents' griefs, and inspired them with ever-soothing hope, served but to increase the agony of his, and to add bitterness to the dictates of despair. Still he in fancy heard his father's kind and deeply-impressive accents, still saw his mother's eyes turning on him with looks of ever-admiring fondness; while that devotion terror-bred which raised his faded eyes to heaven, murmured out for them the prayer he dared not breathe for himself.—Still did he recall with vain but tender regret the humble abode of his beloved parents, and could he but once more repose beneath the paternal roof, he thought his utmost wishes would be indeed accomplished.

But that parental home, that mother's smile, that father's love, which he well knew not even his crimes had deprived him of, shone on him through the thick gloom of his surrounding misery, like the distant and envied light of some high-seated dwelling to the closing eyes of a benighted and sinking traveller; holding out the tantalizing promise of that safety, and that comfort, to which he knows that his exhausted strength will not allow him to attain.

Little did Edwin suspect the improved fortunes of his parents; little did he imagine with what new and mingled feelings they were, in their now elegant abode, commemorating his birth-day!

Austin and his ever-sanguine wife, lost in the contemplation of happiness to come, continued to sit over the dying embers of their fire, till the hour of eleven struck,—till the maids were in bed; till the gardener was gone home, and all seemed at rest but themselves. "And here we are," cried Mrs. Austin, "sitting with our window open, as if we were in our town!" "However," replied Austin, "there is no one to see us; but I will first go and see that the other part of the house is secure, then return to close this shutter, and lock up the watch." Mrs. Austin meanwhile set the candles on the chimney-piece, while she folded up neatly on the table the neckcloths which she had taken out of the drawers, turning her back to the window as she did so. While thus employed, she heard from the parlour adjoining a violent noise, as of persons making a forcible entry; and opening the door, she saw her husband struggling with two men. Screaming violently she was rushing forward to his assistance, when she was forcibly held back by some one behind her, who, no doubt attracted by the glittering of the watch, had entered the house at the window; and as she redoubled her cries, her assailant exclaimed with a dreadful oath, "I'll silence you, woman." Then with a knife he instantly struck her bleeding, dying, though not insensible, on the ground; and he was proceeding to assist the work of death in the next room, when the light from the chimney-piece glared on the face of Mrs. Austin, who now turned her closing eyes towards him; and while terror and astonishment bereaved him of the power of motion, he in his victim, saw and recognised his mother!

Spite of his disguise (for what can hide a child from the quick eye of an affectionate mother?) she saw, she recognised him; and when she stretched out her hand to him in token of forgiveness, as she read the wildness of horror and surprise on his countenance, he uttered a deep groan, and sunk in agony beside her. It was indeed her wretched and guilty son; who having at length joined a gang of highwaymen and housebreakers, one of whom was the man in the stage-coach, had been called upon by his comrades that night, on his return from a distant scene of villany, to join them in an attack on a house full of plate in the neighbourhood! Maternal tenderness, the ruling passion still strong in death, revived Mrs. Austin for awhile; and raising herself with great effort, she gazed with anxious inquiry on Edwin; when seeing her husband nearly overpowered by the ruffians, she uttered a noise of affright, and pushed Edwin with her arm as he lay. That action, and his father's voice in a tone of entreaty and distress, roused him from his momentary stupor; and seizing the knife yet reeking with a mo-

ther's blood, he rushed between his prostrate father and the uplifted blow of destruction; while his astonished comrades beheld their accomplice converted into their assailant.

Whatever was the cause, they found he fought in earnest; but they had given him a wound which would soon have made him defenceless, when the gardener, and a friend who had been luckily sleeping at his house, hearing the noise, rushed in armed with clubs; and the villains were glad to make a precipitate retreat through the window.

The anxious wife and apprehensive mother seemed to struggle with death till this glad moment arrived. She had seen her wretched son fly to save his father's life, and she had seen him accomplish his purpose! It was enough; and when Edwin again throwing himself beside her, exclaimed, "Mother, mother, don't curse me, I have saved him, I have saved him!" hanging over her in agonies that mocked the power of words! while her husband, exhausted with fatigue, and almost paralyzed with horror, crawled towards her and supported her head upon his breast; she moved her lips, as if pronouncing Edwin's pardon; she tried to press his bloody hand to her mouth; then falling back on the bosom of Austin, she expired without a struggle or a groan.

At this moment the blood from the wound which Edwin had received gushed out with frightful violence, and he fell a corpse on the body of his mother.

When the gardener and his friend returned from a vain pursuit of the ruffians, wonder and horror almost chained up their faculties as they beheld the scene before them, and saw the old man sitting, like one bereft of reason, gazing on his dead wife and on his bleeding child. At length wildly starting up, he exclaimed, "*Take notice*, he is *my son;* he *saved my life;* and this wound he received in my defence! Why don't you go for help?—Monsters, would you let him bleed to death?" And as he uttered the last word he sunk into a stupor that lasted several hours. But vain was every aid administered to Edwin; and even parental tenderness, when Austin's senses were thoroughly restored, could not regret that he did not survive the wound he had received.

For Austin had now the mournful satisfaction of seeing his son interred by the side of his mother, his crime concealed, and only his preservation of his father known; for who, as death had sealed the lips both of the culprit and his victim, who could reveal the matricide? Edwin's accomplices had escaped, and even Austin could not have any certain knowledge of the fact, though he only too strongly suspected it; besides, as the coroner's inquest sat on the bodies while anguish had suspended in him the functions of reason, he could give no clue to the murder likely to involve Edwin in any suspicion of having been the perpetrator of it. Therefore, when Austin recovered his reason, he had the satisfaction of hearing that the verdict had been one of "Wilful murder against *persons unknown*." But though, in spite of this verdict, Austin at some moments believed that his wife fell by the hand of Edwin, at other times he convinced himself that Edwin's only guilt was that of having joined a band of ruffians and housebreakers. Still, when on the morning of the funeral he gazed for the last time upon the corpse of his wife, and viewed that face which he had loved through *all its changes*, that face which it was the *only hope* of his oppressed heart that he should soon see again in a more perfect state of being, he turned suddenly to the other coffin, and cast a startled, doubting, and bewildered glance on the face, *once as dear*, of him who had, he feared, deprived her of life. Then pointing to his dead son with fearful meaning and agonized expression, he raised his eyes to heaven in pious gratitude, and exclaimed, "Father! I thank thee; for this *indeed* was MERCY. Yes; poor deluded but affectionate boy!" added he; "whatever were thy crimes, thou hadst thy *wish*, and I *have* been spared the misery of seeing thee die upon a scaffold!"

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

A TALE, FOUNDED ON FACT.

It is a well-known saying, that "le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable," or that the *true* does not always bear the semblance of truth. It is also certain that the incidents of real life are sometimes more incredible than any thing we read of in fictitious history; and most of us can remember, probably, some well-authenticated fact which happened in our memory, that has called forth the sneer of incredulity when it has at a distant period been communicated to others.

"Of the incidents which I am now going to relate," says the writer of the following narrative, "I was myself an eye-witness, and I was present when the heroine of my tale related such parts of her history, as had taken place before I knew her. Still, I am well aware that, though my veracity would not, nay could not, be doubted by those to whom I am known, I might be deemed by strangers not entitled to unqualified belief, because the story which I am going to tell, though certainly le vrai, is not the vraisemblable."

I was the schoolfellow and favourite companion of the Honourable Frederic H——, afterwards Lord D——. True, I was some years his senior; but circumstances had so much endeared us to each other, that we mutually forgot the difference in our ages; and when I left school to study physic at Edin-

burgh, the separation was painfully felt by us both. I had saved the grateful child from drowning, and he never forgot the obligation; while I, on my side, became attached to him from the consciousness of the benefit which I had conferred; nor did absence or distance obliterate either from the mind of the other. We kept up a constant correspondence; and when I went to finish my studies at college, in order to take my degree at the university, it was a great joy to us both to meet again, and I was at least half a year at Trinity after Mr. H—— was a resident there. At the end of that time I went to reside in a provincial town, in order to practise my profession;—H—— having vainly tried to prevail on me to quit physic for the church, promising me a great living in his father's gift.

I had been settled about fifteen years, when H——, who had married at an early age an heiress chosen by his father, succeeded to the title of Viscount D——; but soon after he was rendered one of the most unhappy of men by the death of his wife, who died of her eighth lying-in, leaving him one son, their only surviving child. Beauty was his passion; but his father had consulted more his interest than his taste in the choice of a wife, and Mrs. H—— had certainly every qualification but beauty. However, her virtues and her talents had at length so won upon the excellent heart of her husband, that he had long ceased to remember that her personal charms were few, when death dissolved a union which had been a blessing to both, and my disconsolate friend wrote to beg me to hasten to him in my double capacity of friend and physician. I did so, and found him oppressed not only by the grief which was already overwhelming him, but the fear of that which might too surely be impending; for he thought his son was in great danger of following his beloved mother. I was only too much of the same opinion, and urged an immediate removal to a warmer climate; to be brief, I was prevailed upon, that I might devote myself entirely to my friend and his child, to abandon my profession, and take orders. Accordingly, I returned to college, and in due time I was qualified to accept a very excellent living in Lord D——'s gift, which was on his estate; but it was given to a gentleman to hold for me until I should return from abroad. I also took upon myself the office of tutor to Lord D——'s son; but just as every thing was settled for our setting off for the continent, to winter in some milder climate than our own, the object of our joint anxiety was carried off in a few days by an inflammation on the lungs; and for many months Lord D—— gave way to his feelings of agonizing regret, in a manner that alarmed me for his mind. But at the end of that time he became more composed, and proposed to me that we should resume our plan of leaving England, and travel, without fixing any period for our return. In the interval between his quitting college and his marriage, Lord D—— had visited the continent, and had imbibed such a taste for foreign manners, and the foreign style of levity, that he would fain have persuaded his lady to reside with him abroad for a few years; but she could never be prevailed upon to consent; and he loved her too well to urge what he saw was displeasing to her. Now, however, there was no obstacle to his putting his design in execution—and curiosity made me as eager to go, as preference made him. But as Lord D——, who had seen France, was unacquainted with Spain and Portugal, he resolved to embark at Falmouth for Lisbon, and enter France by the Pyrenees. To Falmouth therefore we repaired; but the wind being against our embarkation, we were reluctantly obliged to prepare for an abode of, perhaps, many days at an inn. The delay, however, was of little consequence to me, as I was deeply engaged in reading Horace, of whom I was meditating a translation; therefore, to me all places were nearly alike; but that restlessness, ever the attendant on recently-experienced affliction, made Lord D—— very impatient of our enforced delays.

One evening, our projected walk having been put a stop to by the threatening appearance of the clouds, I sat down to my Horace; and Lord D——, as was too often the case with him, instead of endeavouring to employ his mind in reading or writing, began his walk up and down the room. Suddenly, however, I was conscious that he turned to the window, which looked into a large garden at the back of the house, and it was not long before I heard him exclaim, "Heavens! what an angel!" However, I went on reading; for knowing his passion for children, and having seen a very lovely child about the house, I concluded this sweet girl was now playing in the garden.

"How beautiful! Do, Moreton, come and look at her!" again cried Lord D——.

"Not now, my dear lord, for I have seen her, and she is very pretty indeed."

"Pretty! she is an angel! and I wonder you did not mention her to me!" I replied not, for I was again engrossed by my book. Soon after, he exclaimed, "She will be wet, I am sure she will, and here is a storm coming and she is at the end of the garden. What can I do?"

"Do!" said I. "Can't you go, as you have your great-coat on, and take her up under your arm, and wrap her up in it, and bring her in?"

"'Sdeath! Moreton, are you mad?" cried Lord D——, indignantly; and, immediately rising, I ran to the window, where I must own that I saw, with more pain than pleasure, not a pretty child, but the most perfectly beautiful woman I ever beheld! She was

dressed in mourning, nearly resembling that of a widow! but her glossy, waving, auburn hair, parted *à la Madonna*, relieved the exquisite white of her forehead, preventing the usual unbecomingness of a widow's costume. Her cheek was pale; but her complexion was so transparent, that the least emotion or movement, crimsoned every part of it. Her eyes were hazel, large, and almost fierce in their expression — her features, faultless in their formation—and her person, tall and well-proportioned, though thin to a fault, was in every respect worthy of her face, and gave to her whole appearance a dignity and a beauty which I never saw before, nor have ever seen since in woman. To be sure I did not, on my first survey, see all I have above described; but I had no sooner beheld her than, aware of Lord D——'s admiration of beauty, and that the heart is never so susceptible as after recent affliction, I felt an involuntary fear that this lovely incognita would captivate him; for, with the conviction of her beauty, came over my mind, at the same time, a distaste to her expression of countenance; and an apprehension that she was ill-calculated to make up to my beloved patron the loss of his admirable wife.

While I was contemplating her as *fixedly*, though not as delightedly, as my friend had done, Lord D—— left the room, seized an umbrella, and running to meet the lady, who was leaning on the arm of a short, thick, odd-looking waiting-maid, he reached her just as the shower fell, and had the satisfaction of conveying her safe from the rain to the house. I had gone to the hall door to wait for them, that I might have a nearer survey of her beauty, and I set down my poor patron as a lost man, when I saw the graceful sweetness and lady-like self-possession with which she thanked him for his attention, and listened to the soft and winning accents of her voice. Then, taking the arm of her servant, she withdrew to her own apartment, and Lord D——, with a deep sigh, returned to ours. "Ay—it is all over with him, poor man!" said I to myself; and piqued, provoked and alarmed, I began reading aloud such parts of Horace as reflected on women; and though I had not read, or thought of the passage since I was a boy at school and had acted Castalio, I caught myself several times during the evening repeating his celebrated speech—

"Who lost Mark Antony the world? A woman!"

Nor did I read without thundering out very impressively—

"———————— deceitful woman,
To the first tempter lewdly she inclined
Her soul, and for an apple damn'd mankind!"

But I really believe Lord D—— neither heard my Horace nor my Otway; for he sat in a sort of abstracted silence, which alarmed me for the danger of his heart more than any loud praise of the beautiful incognita would have done. At length, however, he said, "Moreton, who can that woman be? Her air and carriage bespeak her to be somebody of distinction; let us inquire concerning her of the waiter," and he was accordingly summoned. But all he knew of her was, that she had arrived there the day before us, on her way, like ourselves, to Lisbon, that she never stirred out, never saw any one, and received no letters; that they did not know her name; and that the Welch girl whom she had brought with her scarcely spoke English enough to be intelligible. He also added, that she seemed very unhappy, and frequently was heard to pass half the night in walking up and down her apartment.

"Very mysterious, and very odd!" observed I, when the man had withdrawn.

"Not at all," answered Lord D—— with quickness—"She is evidently a widow, in delicate health and probably reduced circumstances, going to Lisbon for change of air; and having recently lost a beloved husband, she is naturally enough wretched in mind, and can't sleep. *I* have often walked half the night, Moreton."

Now what my friend said was very just. Still I felt a great desire to contradict it; but I was ashamed, and remained silent, and soon after we parted for the night. The next morning when I rose, the first objects that met my eyes were the lady and her maid, and Lord D——, walking together in the garden; and as they were too much engrossed in conversation to see me, I busied myself in studying the countenance of this most lovely of women. I found my prejudice against her increase rather than diminish. My medical profession had given me some of that physiognomical, or rather pathognomical knowledge which distinguishes medical men. Indications of insanity are certainly discoverable to them, when unseen by others, from their habit of acute observation; and though I saw no marks of derangement about this unknown beauty, I discovered, in the quick motion and perturbed expression of her eye, symptoms of alarm, suspicion, and disquiet, which told me all was not at peace within, and that she had something to conceal. But I saw that her beauty had so completely dazzled Lord D——, that he was quite unconscious her countenance was not one to dwell upon with confidence and pleasure; and I hurried down stairs, from a silly feeling as if my presence would be a sort of protection to him from the dangers that assailed him.

"How do you do to-day, Moreton?" said Lord D—— with more vivacity than he had lately exhibited; and before I could even get in a "How do you do, my lord?" he continued; "This, madam, is the kind and tried friend I was mentioning to you, who has pro-

mised never to forsake me, but share my fate whatever it may be."

"Happy you, sir, in possessing such a friend!" replied the lady with a faint smile. She might have called Lord D—— "Sir," even though she was apprised of his rank, still I felt an irresistible desire to let her know his rank, though of my real motives I am not certain.

I have often ridiculed in others the fondness for showing their intimacy with and knowledge of great people. Still, as I have almost always observed that those who are most ready to laugh at this weakness in others, infallibly fall into it themselves whenever they have an opportunity, I am by no means sure that one of my motives for calling my friend by his title as soon as I could, was not the wish of impressing her with an idea of my importance in having a lord for my friend. But whatever was the cause, it is certain that I very soon made an opportunity of saying, "My lord, will your lordship—" and as I did so, I have no doubt but that I looked at the incognita, with an expression which seemed to say, "There! do you hear that?—You are talking thus familiarly with a lord!" I am the more confirmed in this suspicion by the look which she gave me in return; for while

"That eye dropt sense distinct and clear
As any muse's tongue could speak,"

it seemed to say,—"Well, and what then? I have seen a lord before,—ay, and think it no such marvellous fine thing to be the friend of one;" and I felt the blood rush into my face, as a sort of half smile as if in contempt played on her beautiful lip. This was the beginning of those dialogues of looks which this lady and myself from that hour to the last of our acquaintance very frequently held; and when I thus do justice to the powers of her expression, I flatter myself that my readers will believe I was not deficient in similar powers, though I might perhaps be called notwithstanding a very ugly fellow.

But to return to more important matters. These meetings in the garden took place daily; and though nothing could be more proper or more guarded, than the lady's behaviour, I saw that she evinced every day more and more satisfaction whenever my Lord Delborough first accosted her; still her look seemed the result of a restless, unhappy, and undecided mind; and as I could not help surveying her with very scrutinizing looks, I saw that she was often embarrassed by the steadiness of my observation. But the intercourse was at length not confined to the garden:—Lord Delborough offered to lend her books; and the offer being accepted, he carried them himself to her room, and was rewarded by an invitation to walk in. But she kept her maid in the room then, and did the same in future when my friend visited her alone, though when he was accompanied by me the servant was dismissed.

Thus did we pass six weeks, and they passed rapidly to my *friend*, but slowly to *me*, because I wished, what I persisted to think a dangerous intercourse, to be put a stop to by our voyage. However, we had acquired some necessary information during that time; for we had learnt both the maiden and married name of our incognita. One day Lord Delborough said playfully, but evidently with a view to give her an opportunity of naming herself, "I have always forgotten to present my friend properly to you, madam, and he has never done me the favour of presenting me. But 'better late than never.' This, madam, is Mr. Moreton, formerly Dr. Moreton, a learned physician; but as doctor is not a good travelling title, in future he is only Mr. Moreton, at your service."—"And give me leave, madam," said I, "to present to you the viscount D—— of —— Hall, in Rutlandshire, and Portman-square in London."

"But who is to present me to *you*, gentlemen?" replied the lady, blushing deeply, and forcing a smile, though an expression of great distress was visible in her countenance; then recovering herself as rapidly as she could, for she saw then even Lord D—— seemed to think a mutual disclosure of names necessary, she assumed an air of dignity and replied, "I was born a St. Clair and I married a Macdonald," and as she spoke her national pride of birth flushed deeply o'er her face, and, sprung as she was from "the lordly line of high St. Clair," I saw clearly why, at the sound of my friend's rank, she had turned on me a look of such calm and scornful disregard. "Yes," she continued, "my maiden name was Rosabel St. Clair;" and seeing that I regarded her with a scrutinizing look which she probably mistook for a look of suspicion, she fixed her eyes on me, and said, "those who know any thing of the pedigree of my family, must know that Rosabel is one of the family names of the St. Clairs; but I am the last of my branch of that noble family. I was always an only child, and I was soon an orphan; and when Colonel Macdonald made me his wife, I stood alone in creation, without near tie of any kind. But he," she added, clasping her hands together in agony, "he made up to me for the loss of every other tie. He was my all, my pride, and for some years my *blessing!* 'Till ——I lost——" here, too much affected to proceed, she retired into her chamber, leaving my poor friend, who sympathized only too deeply in her affliction, as much affected as herself.

It was some time before she returned to us, but as soon as she did she addressed us thus: "It is so painful to me to recall what I have been, and to contrast it with what I am, that I shall disclose as much of my situation as it is

right for you to know, to convince you that you have not bestowed your attentions on an unworthy object, and then finally drop the subject. When the great misfortune of my life took place, I resolved to quit England for ever, and try by change of scene to divert my mind from images of past happiness which destroyed my peace. I had no paternal fortune; but when my calamities occurred, I found myself possessed of a clear five thousand pounds, and on that sum I knew I could live decently in a foreign country; and I also knew that my mind, accustomed to depend on itself, and capable of being acted upon by new scenes and interests, would gradually recover its tone when removed from its scene of suffering, and that life might once more become interesting to me. At present, however," she continued in a tone of deep dejection, and absolute despondence, "time has done nothing for me yet, nor entire change of scene, because I am still in Britain; but I trust that when I am once settled on some part of the continent, I may become more calm, else death in any shape almost were welcome!"

Lord D——, excessively agitated, could only reply to this mournful address, by broken sentences of sorrow, pity, regret, interest, attachment, esteem, and so forth; but I did not think of making any answer at all, being wholly absorbed in wonder at that almost stern independence of character, as it appeared to me, which had led this young and unprotected woman to disregard the soothings and support of her friends, and to launch out on the world of another country, like a female adventurer seeking as it were her fortune. But *had* she friends? was the question. Had she *deserved* friends? Nor could I behold without a feeling of dismay, the total want of religious comfort or dependence which her language evinced. Not once had she adverted to the necessity of resignation to the divine will, and the comfort which the deepest sorrow derived from that resignation; but she appeared in every thing a self-poised being, wrestling with only mortal strength against the anguish which fate had inflicted, and proudly resolved to prove victorious in the combat. But my infatuated friend saw nothing in her character to counteract the effects of her beauty, and her evident wretchedness only made his benevolent heart yearn towards her more fondly, till the earnest wish to be her consoler and her husband, became triumphant over every other consideration; and I soon discovered that it was Mrs. Macdonald's mourning habit alone which delayed the offer of his hand and heart. How did I congratulate myself that I was not so vulnerable to the power of beauty, nor even to the more lasting attraction of intellect and manner! Else, I too might have loved this fascinating woman, and tasted the agonies of a hopeless attachment. But I was never for a moment in danger. The peculiar expression of her countenance had always rendered me suspicious, and the evident haughtiness of her disposition had from the first repelled me. Nor had her mind, though powerful, any charm for my taste or my judgment; for, though superior, it was not sufficiently so to satisfy either. Like the traveller who has ascended high enough up the side of a lofty mountain to be enveloped in clouds, but not high enough to see them roll away beneath him; so Mrs. Macdonald was sufficiently elevated in understanding above her sex to think she might despise those restraints, those rules of decorum, and those usages of society, which regulate the actions of inferior women, but not wise enough to feel the necessity, the gracefulness, and the benevolent utility of submitting to such restraints. She felt, in her imagined power of self-government, that her innocence and purity, fortified by strength of intellect, did not need the protecting aid of the customary forms of society to guard them from attack. But she did not feel, that as such forms are necessary for the preservation of women exposed by their weakness to danger, it is the more incumbent on those who are raised in intellect above other women, to submit to the salutary restraints of decorum, lest they lead their less-gifted sisters into danger by the seductions of their example. In short, her talents were bright enough to shed an uncertain and lightning brilliancy in her path, calculated to mislead rather than direct; but their brilliance was not strong enough to shine with steady, *noon-day* radiance, and light her with safety and certainty on her way.

It may be thought surprising, and even impossible, that I could discern so easily the defects in this lady's character, and see so evidently the marks in her of some mysterious sorrow, some probably guilty secret, while Lord D—— remained perfectly unconscious of both. To this I reply, that Lord D—— was a man wholly devoid of suspicion, and not gifted with much penetration. He was, on the contrary, even blind to the faults of those he loved; and, being wholly free from guile himself, was never apt to suspect it in others. He was

"So pure, so good, he scarce could guess at sin,
But thought the world without like that within."

Besides, he was in love, and love cast its own beautiful hue over all that he beheld. As the effect of a Claude Lorraine glass sheds one equal and beautifying tint over every landscape and every cloud, giving warmth to coldness, and clothing barren scenes in beauty; so love made every quality in this charming woman assume a charm and appear a virtue in the eyes of her lover; it gave the semblance of tender regret to the gloom of conscious duplicity, and dignified the impetuous inequality of her temper with the name of quick sensibility, and proper self-respect.

Whatever were *my* ideas relative to this

mysterious woman, as she appeared to me, I soon found that they were confined to myself alone, and that Lord D——'s confidence in her was equal to his admiration. At the end of six weeks the wind changed, to the joy of us all. But, when we were on the point of being summoned on board, Mrs. Macdonald became so ill that she was forced to keep her room, and *our* voyage was consequently abandoned; for Lord D—— declared he was bound by powerful ties not to leave this friendless stranger behind in a sick bed; and I was forced to acquiesce, though reluctantly, in the justice of the sentiment. But I soon found that honour itself forbade my friend to leave Falmouth under such circumstances, as he owned to me that he had recently made an offer of his hand to the interesting widow; and that the excessive agitation which his proposal had occasioned, had been followed so closely by her severe indisposition, that he was not only obliged, as a man of honour, to wait to receive her *answer* to his declarations, but his anxiety on account of her illness was increased by the fear of having caused it. At length she recovered, and we were again admitted to her presence; but it was some days before she was sufficienly well to admit Lord D—— to address her again on the subject nearest his heart. At length, however, as he himself informed me, she told him with considerable emotion, that though she was afraid she should never be happy herself, she was willing to do all in her power, to administer to his happiness, conscious as she was, that, if she had any affections left, after all she had endured, those affections would be his, and would lead her to study his comfort in every thing. "My lord," added she, "I am so gratified, and my heart is so touched by the devoted, confiding attachment which you have shown me, that I swear to you, were you my inferior, and a beggar, I would have consented to be yours. So sweet is it to be loved, and so particularly soothing to the torn heart, which, having once been fondly beloved, has been doomed to mourn over the cessation of its blessings." When my friend related these assurances to me I did not entirely believe in them, though he did; but I have since been led to place implicit reliance on their truth, and to admit that what she thus expressed she most thoroughly felt.

The morning after this conversation, she sent for us both into her apartment, and with an expression of countenance in which my friend saw only the confusion of modesty and emotion, but in which I read the perturbation of a conscious and oppressed mind, she told us, that though she saw with pleasure that Lord D——'s confidence in her was such as to make him satisfied with what she had narrated to him of her story, still, for the satisfaction of his friends, (and here she turned on me a most meaning glance,) she had resolved to put it in his power to gain more information relative to her. She therefore, pointing to the table, on which were materials for writing, begged Lord D—— to write down what she dictated, and the result was the following letter enclosed to Messrs. M—— & Co. Bankers, Lombard-street, London, and directed to Mrs. M——, the wife of one of the parties.

Madam,—You would greatly oblige a person much interested in the inquiry, by informing me in a letter, addressed to A. B. Post-office, Falmouth, what you know or think of Mrs. Macdonald, the widow of Colonel Macdonald, who, when you last heard of her, was, you know, on the point of quitting England. Is her character equal to her appearance? and does she deserve the esteem which her *conduct*, and manners, seem so powerfully to challenge?

I am, Madam, your obedient humble serv't,
A. B.

"There is no necessity, none in the world, for an application of this nature," observed Lord D——, "and the testimony of this lady can only confirm all I already think."

"But Mr. Moreton looks," replied Mrs. Macdonald, "as if he approved of the application."

"I should do so," answered I gravely, "if it were made in a proper way; for why should not Lord D—— write in his own name?"

"Because, if I am not what I seem, Mrs. M—— would be more likely to write openly and ingenuously to A. B. than to Lord D——."

"O! certainly, certainly!" interrupted Lord D——, "nothing can be more honourable and delicate than your motives—and I will hear no objections made, but seal and send the letter directly."

I therefore, on hearing this, saw it would be fruitless to say any more on the subject; though I felt assured, that a woman who really wished to establish her identity, and had the means of doing it in a satisfactory manner, would have set about the task in a very different manner; and instead of giving one reference, would have given many, and not have dictated an anonymous letter to any one. However, my opinion was of no importance, and the letter was sent, and *answered* by return of post. It was as follows:

Sir,—Your letter gave me pleasure, though from a writer unknown, because it afforded me an opportunity of speaking of Mrs. Macdonald in the terms which she *deserves*. Sir, her virtues and her talents are equal to her beauty, and though not happy, no one ever deserved happiness more; but she is only too much wedded to the memory of a very bad, unfaithful husband, whose sudden death ought to have been a source of rejoicing to *her*, as well as to her friends.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
A. M.

Lord D——'s delight on perusing this letter, could only be exceeded by Mrs. Macdonald's trepidation on its delivery; and when, having read it herself, she gave it with a look of triumph, to me, her face became of a hue resembling death itself. When I came to the part relative to the sudden death of Colonel Macdonald, I involuntarily exclaimed, "*sudden* death! I did not understand the death was sudden." "Sudden!" exclaimed Mrs. Macdonald, echoing my word—"Sudden! O ay, so it was sudden;" and holding her hand to her head, she left the room.

Reader, though well convinced that a suspicious is an unamiable temper, I must honestly confess that, at this moment, a suspicion of a most horrible nature took possession of my mind, while my more generous patron remained as confiding as before, and saw, in the strong emotion of Mrs. Macdonald nothing but a very natural distress at hearing the sudden death of her husband alluded to. But then he was in love and I not; and a man who chooses a wife under the delusions of passion, appears to *me* to be no more a rational judge of the results of his actions, than a man who enlists for a soldier when in a state of intoxication. From this *unfortunate* moment I entertained a horror of my patron's approaching union, and I was forced to quit the room abruptly, when I learnt that as soon as the two years' mourning of Mrs. Macdonald had expired, she would become the wife of Lord D——.

We were soon after summoned on board, as the wind was again favourable; and after a short passage we found ourselves in Portugal. To be brief; my friend was united to Mrs. Macdonald very soon after we reached Lisbon, by an English clergyman, chaplain to the factory there. I, with a heavy heart, witnessed the ceremony; nor could I behold without the greatest pain the excessive agitation, and the coldness almost amounting to aversion, which every speaking look of the trembling bride evinced. Yet if ever there was a man formed to inspire love, and possessed of every qualification to retain it when once inspired, such a man was Lord D——. His face and person were of the first order of manly beauty, and in temper and attainments of various kinds, I never knew his equal; yet it seemed to me, that the woman to whom he was about to confide his honour and his happiness gave him her hand almost with loathing and terror, and seemed to consider herself as a devoted victim rather than a happy bride. But the bridegroom, wholly blinded by passion, saw nothing but the proper modesty of the sex in the behaviour of that unaccountable being; and his happiness was as great as my anxiety. I hate national prejudices, and it has always been the study of my life to conquer mine; but now in spite of myself, my old aversion to the Scotch nation returned, and I thought of Catherine Nairn, who was privy to the murder of her husband, till I felt my prejudices against Scotch women get ahead of me with frightful strength. And the new Lady D—— was born a St. Clair, and married to a Macdonald! and her first husband had *died suddenly!* He had also been an unfaithful and bad husband, and his death ought to have been a relief to her, it seemed! Yet she was not only wretched beyond any hope, she said, of ever being happy again, but had *evidently* a weight upon her mind; a weight that *sorrow only* could not create. It cannot be supposed that, as these suspicions were uppermost in my mind, they did not show themselves on my countenance; and I soon perceived that Lady D—— observed and understood the character of the looks I gave her; and that she watched me as much as I watched her. It at length occurred to me, that I would try to find out whether Mrs. M——, the banker's wife, was a respectable woman, and her testimony worthy credit. Accordingly I wrote to a friend in London, to inquire concerning her, without naming my patron's marriage, because to say the truth, I was *ashamed* of it, and I received an answer which satisfied my mind in some measure; for it stated that Mrs. M—— was one of the best and first of women, and so rigid in her ideas, that no woman, but of the most unblemished character could be honoured with her friendship and countenance. This was much, certainly, in Lady D——'s favour; and a few days after I received this letter, I said, "Has not your ladyship written to Mrs. M——, your friend, to announce your marriage?"

"No, sir," she replied with great vehemence and indignation, but in great confusion also, "I have not written, nor shall I write."

"No! dearest Rosabel! and why not?" asked Lord D——.

"Because I do not feel any friendly disposition towards Mrs. M——. She has always spoken disrespectfully of my poor husband; and I ask you, Lord D——, if *you* could ever have treated and considered as a friend the person who had spoken irreverently and unjustly of the wife whom you regretted?"

"Oh! certainly not," replied Lord D——, "I enter into the feeling—and do not any longer wonder at your silence."

I said nothing, but I believe I looked a great deal; for Lady D——'s eyes regarded me with peculiar fierceness. What she had said might be fine sentiment and delicate feeling, but I thought it contrary both to gratitude and justice; for, if Mrs. M—— resented as a friend Colonel Macdonald's ill-usage of his wife, that wife ought at least to feel grateful for the severity of animadversion which, however erroneous, had its origin in kindness towards her; and I thought that she was bound in justice and proper feeling to impart to Mrs. M—— the *good* fortune which had befallen her. I did not, however, utter what I

thought; but I could not help saying, "And have you written, madam, neither to friends nor relations to announce your change of situation?"

"I have told you before, sir," she replied very pettishly, "that I have no relations except distant branches of the St. Clairs, who perhaps never heard of me; and as to my friends, all recollection of, and all connexion with my native country is so painful to me, that I wish to be as one who exists not, to all who have ever known me; and most truly can I now say," looking with seducing tenderness on her husband, "that this room contains the whole world to me, and here all my wishes centre."

The woman who spoke thus was young and beautiful beyond the power of description, and the man to whom she spoke was young also, an idolater of beauty, and of feelings the most impassioned and affectionate. It was impossible, therefore, for him not to think all his bride uttered or did, was "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;" and the delusion he was under seemed to render him so happy, that I sighed almost with envy, while I felt how impossible it was for *me* to be so deluded. Yet still it was to me inconceivable that Lord D—— did not feel wonder, if nothing more, at Lady D——'s neither writing nor receiving letters of any kind; but he had no suspicions, and it was not my duty to give him even a hint of mine.

After travelling some time, it was resolved that we should take up our residence for several months at Lausanne, and thence proceed to Marseilles.

While we were at Lausanne, Lady D—— was prevailed upon to mix occasionally in the society there; but not, I observed, till she had fully ascertained the names of those whom she was either to meet or to receive. In these societies, which consisted of the natives and a few English families long residents at Lausanne, and foreigners of all nations, she laid herself out to please, and succeeded to her utmost wishes; not that her manner for an instant bordered on levity, or that she forgot the usual dignity which distinguished her; but she conversed much and generally, and on a variety of topics; though I remarked that she was more popular among the men than the women; as the latter, spite of her complaisance, were not slow to discover, as self-love has great quickness of discernment, that she felt them to be her inferiors in the scale of creation; and that with the other sex only could she converse on equal terms. She was sometimes also prevailed upon to join parties on the lake; and when she did so, many boats were in the habit of following ours, in order to catch some of the fine and touching tones which, when the lake was still, this highly-gifted woman condescended to breathe forth. In singing the plaintive airs of her country, she was in my opinion unrivalled; and the appropriate expression which she threw into her face while singing, added greatly to the effect of her voice.

But these water parties were suddenly put a stop to, and our departure from Lausanne hastened by the following circumstance:

We were rowing along the lake one day, in a party consisting of about eight persons, besides ourselves; and Lady D——, who usually wore a veil, was that evening without one, as she had dropped in the water the one she had worn when she left the house, while entering the boat, and had therefore given it to one of the servants in attendance to be carried home again. She was this evening unusually animated; when suddenly I saw her countenance change, and her hand applied to her hat in order to pull down her veil; but finding she sought it in vain, she hastily applied her handkerchief to her face; and, as I followed the direction of her eyes, I saw them fixed on a boat which had just passed us *à la rame*, and in which was a young lady singing.

"Who are those?" said Lord D—— to a Swiss gentleman. "A family, I believe," he replied, "just come from Scotland; and with them is a Miss Buchanan, who is at this moment singing, and sings I am told like an angel,—that is almost as well as Lady D——."

"Indeed!" cried Lord D—— smiling, "I wish I could hear her. I should like to hear a lady who sings almost as well as lady D——; and as they are resting on their oars, our rowers may easily overtake them."

"Not for the world," exclaimed Lady D——; "pray let us turn about instantly, and make for the shore as fast as possible, for I am sure that dark cloud over our head is full of mischief."

"Oh, no, of nothing but a little harmless rain, against which we are prepared."

"You may think so, my lord; but I am of a different opinion. I believe we shall have a tempest, and I am so alarmed, so nervous, that I must insist on returning directly."

Lord D—— did indeed read such alarm in his wife's countenance, that he gave orders for tacking about immediately, and they were obeyed; while the rest of the company, not being so candid as he was, did not, I am convinced by their looks, attribute, as he did, Lady D——'s wish to return home to apprehensive nervousness, but to the dread of her hearing singing as fine if not finer than her own. But *I* imputed different motives to her conduct; and when she turned a look of anxious inquiry on me, I saw that she read in my eyes the anxious suspicions which I felt.

While we were turning round, the black cloud grew darker and darker, and Lord D—— insisted on Lady D——'s wrapping a boat-cloak round her; and as she did so, she dropped her handkerchief into the lake, which was

instantly carried off by a wave, and irrecoverable almost as soon as lost.

"What shall I do? I have lost my handkerchief!" cried Lady D—— in a tone of dismay. "Lend me yours, my dear lord, to hold to my face, in case, as I feel pain there, of a return of such as I felt just now."

Lord D—— felt for his handkerchief directly; but recollected that he had left it on the shore, while assisting his lady into the boat.

"Provoking!" muttered Lady D——; and as her eye met mine, a blush of confusion passed over her pale cheek.

At this moment we were turned towards the land, and we beheld two ladies and a gentleman, the former of which were standing on the shore dressed in plaid ribbons.

"See, Rosabel, the colours of your country!" cried Lord D——.

"Is Lady D—— a Scotchwoman?" cried the Swiss gentleman. "Then she would like to know her countrywomen, for those ladies are part of the Scotch family in the boat; and as we must land near them, I shall beg leave to present them to her ladyship."

As he said this I turned my eyes on Lady D——, and saw her sink pale as death on the shoulder of her lord. I concluded therefore that she knew the moment of detection and discovery was now arrived; and that, whatever her story was, a meeting with those ladies would disclose it. Wherefore then was I not eager to expedite this moment? and why did I shrink from a scene that I had so long desired? for I *did* shrink from it, and I trembled with apprehension equal to that of the unfortunate Rosabel. No doubt my predominant feeling was a dread of my patron's happiness being destroyed by the discovery; but I suspect that pity, and a sort of unconscious interest which I felt in her fate, made me thus averse to what I had before desired, and while she lay nearly fainting on Lord D——'s arm, with her face hidden on his shoulder, I was contriving how I could screen her from the observation of those to whom her evident indisposition made an introduction, when we landed, entirely improper. In the meanwhile the boat rapidly advanced towards the land, and the strangers were evidently awaiting its approach. Nothing, thought I, can now save her from a public exposure, but a miracle; and an involuntary "Gracious Heaven!" escaped me. It roused Lady D—— from her mournful stupor; and raising her head, she cast on me I thought an appealing look, and a look of such woe! I felt it deeply; and approaching her I said, "Dear lady, I wish I did not see you thus."

At this moment the dark cloud discharged itself in torrents of rain, and the curious strangers were forced to run hastily away to seek shelter; and for the present I felt that Lady D—— was saved from what she dreaded. I therefore turned round to her with an expression, I believe, of great exultation in my countenance; for while in hers I read equal pleasure and triumph, I also saw in it a look of grateful kindness towards myself. The strangers had now entirely disappeared; therefore, as we had reached the shore, Lady D—— felt herself secure, and declared that her faintness was entirely at an end.

"I never suspected your ladyship of being a coward," said one of the gentlemen; "I thought you left such feminine weakness to inferior women."

"No one is always equally firm in mind and nerve," she replied, blushing deeply, ashamed of being forced to feign the weakness which she felt not; for Lady D—— I well knew had no apprehensions of any kind, and I echoed the deep sigh which she heaved for her own degradation. But her danger was nearer than ever; for, as we came in sight of a sort of shed on our way, we saw the strangers at the door of it, while the Swiss gentleman exclaimed, "There they are, Lady D——; there are your countrywomen!" I immediately said, "Lady D—— is still too unwell to have them presented to her, sir;" while she, scarcely conscious what she did, laid hold of my arm, and, stopping as if to take breath, turned her back on the shed.

"O that I had but a pocket-handkerchief," she exclaimed, "to hold to this aching face of mine!"

"Lend her yours, Moreton," said Lord D——. It was impossible, for mine was begrimed with snuff.

"How unfortunate! Yet what a ridiculous distress," returned Lord D——, "that in all this company I am sure there is not a handkerchief proper to be lent to a lady, as they are all snuff-takers!"

Lord D—— smiled with his usual expression of internal peace as he said this.

"Alas!" thought I, "he may soon learn never to smile again, perhaps;" for I saw that, unless we could conceal Lady D——'s face, something unpleasant if not terrible must occur. Lady D——'s back was at this moment towards me, and the train of her gown, which was muslin, got loose and fell on the ground. A lucky thought struck me. I took it up, and, throwing it over her head, exclaimed, "There, my lady, this will keep your ribbons from the rain, and will also serve to wrap in folds about your face, instead of a handkerchief."

"It will indeed! a thousand thanks to you!" she replied, in a faltering voice; and instantly turning round, secure from being recognised through the thick folds of the muslin, she declared herself able to proceed, and she passed fearlessly before the searching eyes of the *nouveaux arrivés*; who evidently had heard of her beauty, and were eager, especially the gentlemen of the party, to be presented

to her by their Swiss acquaintance. But he had taken my hints, and did not offer to present any of them at so unpropitious a moment. I found that one of the ladies was the eldest sister of the Miss Buchanan who was singing in the boat, and I was certain that to these ladies Lady D—— was personally known.

When we reached our home, Lady D—— retired immediately to her own room, pleading indisposition as an excuse; and as she gave me her hand while she bade me good night, I thought she pressed it kindly, while tears stood in her beautiful eyes. But the next day she resumed her usually distant manner; and though she knew that I had discovered she had a secret, and understood the nature of her distress of the preceding day, she set me again at defiance, and would not place any confidence in me. With this consciousness returned my wish to discover her secret; and I was therefore much provoked, when, on pretence that the air of Lausanne disagreed with her, she bound Lord D—— to set off the next day towards Marseilles, thereby making a meeting with the Scotch ladies impossible. At Marseilles we were joined by the heir-at-law to my patron's titles and estates, in case he died without children. Lord D——, during the first paroxysms of his grief for the loss of his wife and son, had assured this youth that he should never marry again, but consider him as his child. It was therefore probably some mortification to find his cousin married when he arrived at Marseilles. However, as yet, Lady D—— did not seem likely to have a family, and she paid such attention to this youth, and took such pains to win his good-will, that he was not only quite reconciled to his own disappointment before he left us, but was almost in love with the cause of it. But almost as soon as he was gone, Lord D——, with infinite delight, drew from his wife a reluctant confession that he was likely to be a father; and I must declare that on this occasion I most cordially sympathized in his happiness. But, strange to say, Lady D——, so far from sharing in our joy, seemed overwhelmed with grief by the conviction that she was likely to be a mother, and her impatience under the illness incident to her situation could not be sufficiently accounted for by the usual fretfulness of disease. On the contrary, it bore the strongest marks of misery and bitter regret.

During the first months of her pregnancy she declined going out entirely; and as I insisted on Lord D——'s taking exercise, because I was convinced that it was requisite for his health, I was necessarily the companion of his lady, who, though I was sure she did not like me, preferred even my society to being left to the misery of her own thoughts. Sometimes, indeed, closely muffled up, she went with us to the theatre; but she always sat in *une loge grillée;* and, as at Paris, and in other large places, she always screened herself from view as much as possible. And considering that her beauty, wherever she allowed it to be seen, excited even loud testimonies of admiration, and that *la belle Angloise* was followed as soon as beheld, it must be surmised that personal vanity was not amongst her weaknesses, or, if it were, it was conquered by some passion more powerful still. It is also a very decisive proof of the pure and true love Lord D—— bore her, that, satisfied with possessing her and her affection, he did not want the gratification to his pride of displaying his treasure to the world. But, with the exception of the evenings which he passed at the theatre, we were commonly at home alone; and I, as I before said, had frequent opportunities of conversing tête-à-tête with Lady D——. I found her competent to converse on various subjects, and eager, by involving herself and me in an argument, to lose her sense of suffering in the excitements of disputation. But on some subjects we agreed; subjects too on which my suspicious nature had led me occasionally to expect she would agree with me faintly, and with evident confusion of manner. Amongst other topics, I one day started that of remarkable trials; and I had *nerve* enough to ask her if she had ever read the trial of her countrywoman, Catherine Nairn, for the murder of her husband. With great quickness, and an unembarrassed smile, she replied, "I shall, in return, ask you whether you ever read the trial of *your* countrywoman, Mary Blandy, and for murder also, even the murder of her father; for crimes are not confined to countries, my dear sir, but are free citizens of the world."

"Granted," I answered; "and I assure you I meant no national reflection when I mentioned Catherine Nairn as your ladyship's countrywoman; but I think there is stronger evidence of the guilt of the one than of the other."

"I agree with you," she calmly replied, "for I have never been able to convince myself that Miss Blandy thought the powders she administered were poison. But of Catherine Nairn's guilt, there could be no doubt; and who can wonder that a woman capable of such aggravated and shameless adultery should not scruple to add to it the crime of *murder?* I have always considered all the crimes as near relations, and very apt to assemble in family parties."

"True," answered I; "and such adultery as this was likely to end in the worst species of murder, that, long premeditated,—and not the result of impetuous passion and sudden impulse. Yet, after all," added I, "whether murder be premeditated or only sudden, it is, nevertheless, murder, and a very great crime, even if that most powerful of passions, jealousy, excited to it."

As I said this, I fixed my eyes steadily

on Lady D——, and I saw her cheek turn deadly pale, and a sort of convulsive motion agitate her upper lip. For a minute she was silent; but, recovering herself, she said in a hoarse voice, "If any thing can palliate the crime of murder, it must be jealousy, for that is of all feelings the most powerful and the most accurst; and let not those who have never experienced its influence, presume to censure the unhappy being who, in a moment of frantic jealousy, attempts the life of the offender. Nor let them dare, like the pharisee of old, secure in *untempted* innocence, to thank God that they are not like this erring fellow-creature." So saying, with a countenance stern yet sorrowful, she darted on me a look of haughty defiance, and slowly and majestically left the room, leaving me more bewildered, and certainly more *suspicious* than ever. And *yet*, had this evidently unhappy woman been conscious of having, in any way, and from sudden impulse, hastened her husband's death, her emotion when she spoke as above would have been infinitely greater. Still I saw, that on this subject of murder from sudden impulse, she was *vulnerable*, and I knew not what to think.

By this time she had become as great an object of interest to me as to Lord D——, though it was interest of a totally different sort; and the acuteness of her observation soon led her to feel the extent of the interest which she excited in me. She was always, I observed, conscious of my motives, when I started particular topics, with a view, as Hamlet said of his tragedy, "to catch her conscience." Sometimes I fancied she might have committed felony or forgery; and then I mentioned shoplifting as being sometimes practised by ladies, and that I had heard of ladies who were forced to leave their country, because they had forged notes to a considerable amount.

"Very possibly," she replied with a look of calm contempt; "there is no calculating on the probable obliquity of human nature."

On the subject of female chastity she was equally unperturbed; and though professing not to like Dr. Johnson on account of his illiberal prejudices against her country, she spoke in high terms of his opinion on that old and hackneyed subject; and she added, "As happiness is 'our being's end and aim,' I think that, setting aside the restraints of religion and morality, a woman who yields her honour to the dictates of passion mistakes her object, if happiness be that object; for, even supposing that her lover be constant and affectionate, she has to bear up against the world's 'dread scorn,' and utter rejection by her own sex,—a consciousness under which no woman can exist with comfort and peace of mind. Therefore, a woman who expects to be happy while suffering under the results of a state of guilt, is like an indigent man who gives great entertainments, and forgets that the day of payment for them must come, a day for which he is wholly unprepared and unprovided."

To this I could only reply in terms of acquiescence and approbation; and though I am far from thinking that blushes or confusion, when such a subject was started, would have been proofs of conscious incontinence in her or any woman, because the conviction of being *suspected* would alone have been sufficient to excite this emotion; I am well convinced that no woman who was not conscious of innocence could have talked so calmly, so fully, and with such apparent satisfaction, on the subject in question.

But we did not always agree so well, nor was she always as gentle in her mode of arguing. One evening the conversation happening to turn on the subject of the laws respecting women, she contended that for the rights of women there was not a sufficient protection in any code of laws.

"Our Scotch laws, however," said she, "in one respect are very indulgent to us, and are properly regardful of our rights and injuries; I allude to the power granted a Scotchwoman, or even a woman resident in Scotland, to divorce her husband for infidelity."

"I am not quite aware," said I, "that this is a wise and good law; and——"

"So, sir!" interrupted Lady D—— with a countenance of flame, "I suppose you are one of those beings who expect in the weaker sex, as you think proper to call us, that command of our passions which you deem it a merit in yourselves neither to have nor to *affect*; and while you dare to divorce us for one error, however excused by your base conduct, it is your odious selfish maxim,

'That man, the lawless libertine, may rove,
Free and unquestion'd through the wilds of love.'"

"Madam," replied I, a little confounded at her vehemence, "I am no advocate for profligacy either in man or woman; but I can quote the great authority which you yourself applied so well on the subject of female chastity, in support of my own opinion, that if a man does not insult his wife, she would be to blame to resent very highly an occasional error of this kind in an otherwise good and affectionate husband."

"Sir," returned Lady D——, every fibre of her frame trembling with strong emotion, "this is one among the many instances of gross contradiction in morals that disgraces that illiberal writer, sir; so far am I from agreeing with you and him on this subject," (and as she said this she rose from her seat, stretching her fine throat to the utmost, while she regarded me with eyes of fire, that seemed as if they would have annihilated me if they could,) "Sir, I solemnly assure you, that I should think myself as entirely divorced from

my husband by even one act of infidelity on his part, as if a legal act of separation between us had taken place."

"My dearest love," cried Lord D—— smiling, but terrified and amazed at her emotion, "what necessity is there for you to hold out so formidable a threat to *me?* There is very little chance of my ever incurring this severe penalty; for I am by nature constant; and till I meet with your superior in beauty and every other attraction, a most hopeless expectation, there is no danger of my being an unfaithful husband."

During this speech, emotions of the most violent kind seemed to agitate her whole frame; and when it was ended, she turned on him a look of the most mournful but touching tenderness; then stretching out her hand towards him she fell in a deep swoon into his extended arms. It was some time before she recovered her senses perfectly; and when she did, she was so ill that I insisted on having further medical advice. And the gentlemen whom we called in assured Lord D—— that any agitation would in all probability occasion a premature confinement, if such an accident were not on the point of happening already. Nothing could exceed the agony with which Lord D—— listened to this possible downfall of his hopes, except the calmness and apparent indifference with which his wife heard it; nay, it seemed to me that her countenance expressed *pleasure*, rather than pain. "Strange, inexplicable woman!" thought I; "and can a creature of your strong affections rejoice in the probability of having your prospect of being a mother destroyed?" But our fears proved false; and in due time Lady D——, to the great joy of her lord, was delivered of a son.

Whatever Lady D——'s feelings were before her confinement, it is very certain that maternal tenderness at first beamed in her expressive face, and lighted up her beautiful eyes, when she gazed upon her lovely boy and received him to her maternal bosom. But I perceived, after she had been a few weeks a mother, that her pleasure in her infant seemed to subside; and that while she looked on him a deep gloom gathered over her countenance, while sometimes she would clasp him to her breast with energy, as if her very being depended upon him, and the next she shrunk from him as if his birth and his existence were a disgrace and a curse to her. In short, derangement alone could, I thought, account for the strangeness of her manner towards this lovely child. But she had no other symptoms of derangement, and I was more and more bewildered in my conjectures respecting her, when the poor infant, who had excited in me this new train of thought, was seized with convulsions, and I had soon no hope of his life. To this hour, I cannot recall without the most painful emotion the strange, undefinable and unaccountable struggles of mind and feeling exhibited by this mysterious woman. Her agonies, while she beheld the sufferings of her child, were such as the most flinty heart could not behold unmoved. Still her regret seemed to subside with his apparent pangs, and the idea that he must ultimately die, appeared to occasion her very little anguish. Just before the poor infant breathed its last on the lap of its mother, who had held it through all its struggles with exemplary firmness, spite of the most evident agony, I forced Lord D——, whose grief was terrible to behold, out of the room; and I returned unseen by Lady D——, who had sent the nurse away on some errand, just as the child ceased to exist, and the shuddering mother was convinced that she held a corpse in her arms. Never shall I forget the expression with which she gazed on it; but satisfaction was evidently the sole feeling uppermost at length; and I heard her, before she discovered me, exclaim, "Yes, its death is a blessing, not a curse; and I rejoice, for to rejoice in it is my duty." On seeing me she started, and was evidently shocked and alarmed at discovering by my countenance of wonder and inquiry that I had overheard her words; but with infinite readiness she said, "Yes, to rejoice in every dispensation of Providence is our duty, and to believe that what he thinks proper to deprive us of, would have been a curse rather than a blessing."

This, had I considered her a pious woman, I might have received as the *real* interpretation of her words; but as I had always in vain looked for in her that steady faith, that consoling piety, and that restraining sense of religion, which at once call forth, support, and reward virtue, especially in women, I could only consider her words as meant to mislead me, and to conceal from me those feelings which I certainly was wholly unable to comprehend. She soon saw, by my looks and manner, that she had degraded herself in vain by this exhibition of artifice, and she hastened from me in search of her afflicted lord as soon as the nurse had taken from her the body of the infant, on whose lips she imprinted a long, long kiss, heaving a sigh as she did so, which, though not perhaps occasioned by regret for its loss, was indeed the sigh of misery unbounded.

From this moment Lady D——'s manner towards me changed, and she became kind and conciliating; and when Lord D——'s grief for the child, in which she seemed to sympathize, had in a degree subsided, and he was disposed to go out as usual, she contrived to disarm me of the watchful suspicion with which I looked at and listened to her, by a seeming inclination to confide that distress to me which she saw she could not conceal; and she every now and then insinuated with a deep sigh how much she wished to have a faithful, soothing, and safe friend, in whose honour she could repose that confidence which consideration for his peace forbade her to repose in her husband;

and flattered by the attention she now paid me, and her seeming to regard me as a man worthy of her confidence, I lost my usual attentive watchfulness, and became only solicitous to convince her that in me she had a sincere, trusty, and zealous friend.

Though she always persisted in wearing a deep thick veil, she was now no longer averse to take walks on some of the best promenades about Marseilles; and sometimes she condescended to walk attended only by me. One day, as she was leaning on my arm, and walking with me in an unfrequented street, I observed a very beautiful effect of light on the sails of a vessel seen at a distance in the port of Marseilles, and as at the corner of the street she threw up her veil to enable her to see it more distinctly, a gentleman turned suddenly upon us, whom I knew by his dress and appearance to be an Englishman. At sight of Lady D——, he started back with an exclamation of alarm and surprise, and at sight of him she drew down her veil, and fled with precipitation down the first turning which would, she knew, lead her home the nearest way; while he as swiftly followed her. Thinking the moment was come to clear up all the mysteries that appertained to this *extraordinary* woman, I prepared to follow the gentleman; but not observing, in my haste, a post which a man was carrying on his shoulder, I knocked my head against it with such violence, that it stretched me insensible on the earth; and when I recovered I found myself in a shop, and a man and woman chafing my temples, while Lady D—— and the gentleman had both disappeared. As soon as I was recovered, or even before, I set off on my way home, and found that Lady D—— had been returned some time. "Did her ladyship return alone?" said I. "Yes," was the reply; "and my lady seemed much agitated, for she had been frightened in the street."

"So! that is the turn she means to give the business, is it?" said I to myself. "Well, we shall see how she contrives."

"So, Moreton," said Lord D——, coming into the parlour with his lady, "I find Rosabel has little confidence in your strength or courage, as she chose to trust to her feet, rather than your arm to defend her from a madman!"

"A madman! Was the gentleman, at sight of whom your lady fled so precipitately, a madman? I saw they knew each other, but I did not read his malady in his face."

"No, very likely not," replied Lady D—— in a hurried manner, and forcing a laugh—"but it was a gentleman whom I have known many years, and who in his derangement always persecuted me with his addresses; and the surprise of seeing him at Marseilles, even though protected by you, had such an effect on me, that, as usual, terror urged me to fly, and I fled the faster because I saw that he pursued me. But till I lost sight of him by taking a sudden turn that led hither, I hoped every minute to hear or see you pursuing us both, and I wondered at your want of gallantry."

I then explained why I could not pursue them; and I saw satisfaction beam in her whole countenance, at the assurance my relation gave her that I had not seen or conversed with the gentleman. But I resolved to go out the next day, and never rest till I had found this man, mad or not mad. I was therefore excessively provoked, when I found that we were going to set off in less than an hour on the road to Nice, our departure having been hastened by the terror which Lady D—— had expressed (real terror, I did not doubt) of meeting this madman, as she called him, again. But my reluctance could not avail; nor dared I express it, lest its cause should be suspected; and in an hour we actually left Marseilles.

Thus were the means of gratifying a very laudable and natural curiosity snatched from me, just as chance had thrown it in my way. I however consoled myself with the idea, that if I had made any discovery to the prejudice of this mysterious wife, I should have found myself in a most painful predicament; for if I concealed the circumstance from my noble friend, I should have been guilty of breach of faith; and if I revealed it, I should have destroyed his happiness. Still my restless curiosity remained unsatisfied, and on the watch; nor could Lady D——'s continued hints of meaning to confide in me, impose on or satisfy me any longer; because, in the first place, I was sure she had something on her mind which she *dared* not disclose; and in the next, I no longer wished to know what I could not, yet ought to disclose to her lord.

Not long after we had taken up our residence at Nice, we one day found Lady D—— in a situation which alarmed us all exceedingly. One of the servants on entering the room found her lying on the floor in a swoon, and covered with blood. Her shrieks summoned me, and on raising her, I found that the blood proceeded from her mouth, and was evidently occasioned by her having broken a blood-vessel; while her distorted features wore the marks of excessive agitation. On the table by her lay an old English newspaper, in which some articles from England, which had lately come over, had been wrapped up. This paper Lady D—— seemed to have crushed together with a sort of convulsive grasp; but whether from intention, or not, I could not decide. When she recovered her senses, her perceptions did not at first return; but as soon as consciousness was entirely restored, the expression of despair and woe was imprinted on her countenance. I observed her eye turn with quickness and apprehension on the newspaper, which she suddenly seized, smoothed, doubled, and put in her pocket; and I regretted my folly in not making myself master of it,

as I had already suspected it was the probable cause of her illness. The loss of blood had been so great, and I thought the bleeding so likely to come on again, that I insisted on her not speaking, but allowing herself to be conveyed slowly and carefully to bed on my arms and that of her attendants; while I congratulated myself that my poor friend was absent, and could not return till she was in bed, and the horrible evidences of her malady removed; for never did man more fondly dote on woman than he on her; and, but for her occasional violence, her want in my eyes of feminine qualities, and the mystery that enveloped her, I could then have said that never was woman more worthy to be doted upon; for she was generous, affectionate, pure-minded, and, as I always believed, irreproachably chaste in every point of view; and I could not but fancy that *one* single *error* had involved her in the necessity of pursuing a train of deception, which her lofty soul despised itself for having had recourse to. When she was in bed, and I was going to leave her to her servants, she laid her languid hand on my arm; and as she saw by my manner that I thought her case an alarming one, she breathed out, even with an expression of delight in her eyes, "Do you think I shall die, Mr. Moreton?"

"I hope, I trust not, dear madam, for my poor friend's sake," I replied in a voice hoarse with emotion.

"But not for *my own*. I thank you; it is kind," she answered, "for I have indeed lived long enough;" then waving her hand for me to depart, she saved me the pain and the difficulty of replying.

Lord D——'s fortitude entirely forsook him, as I expected it would do when he heard what had happened, and I thought it my duty to prepare him for the worst; not that I concluded she was in any immediate danger, but the transparency of her complexion, and other circumstances, had led me to believe that breaking a blood-vessel must be to her an accident of a very serious nature; and as I had no doubt but that emotion had occasioned this first rupture; emotion, to which she was only too subject, would be very likely to bring on the bleeding again. But she recovered from the effects of this accident much sooner, and much more thoroughly than I expected; for there was now, to my observant eyes, a degree of quiet sorrow, of settled despair, unlike her former restlessness, which was favourable to her complaint. Still, strange to say, my deceived friend saw nothing of this, but attributed the touching languor of her voice, manner, and countenance, to disease alone, and those recollected sorrows which she had always told him she should retain the marks and the remembrance of even in the bosom of happiness. But as soon as she was seized with these dangerous symptoms, I thought it proper that her own maid should always sleep in her apartment; and when she was recovered, she insisted that this arrangement should remain unchanged.

Some months had now elapsed, and, reclined chiefly on a sofa, Lady D—— was as able as ever to listen to us, while we read, or even to converse nearly as well as usual, when we were informed of the arrival of a Scotch family at Nice, and Lord D—— was invited to meet them at the house of a gentleman whom he knew; and, as he was sure I would remain with Lady D——, he did not scruple to say he would accept the invitation.

I observed Lady D——'s countenance change when her lord said he was going to meet a Scotch family. However, she remained silent, and his lordship departed. During the rest of the day she was frequently very absent and uneasy, and when we heard my friend's voice on the stairs she became agitated. He entered, evidently in high spirits, and as if pleased with his visit. "My dearest Rosabel," said he, kissing her cold hand, "I have passed as pleasant a day as I can pass absent from you, and, would you believe it? with ——" Here Lady D—— ininterrupting him, begged he would remove the candles to another part of the room, as the light hurt her eyes; then throwing a veil over her face, she allowed him to resume the thread of his discourse. "Yes, Rosabel, would you believe it? I have actually been in company with a Macdonald—a Colonel Macdonald of Dunkeld—and perhaps a relation of yours by marriage. I told him across the table, I had had the honour to marry a Macdonald; and hoped we were relations. He bowed, and said he hoped so too, but that Macdonald was so common a name he dared not flatter himself it was so. Was I right, Rosabel? Were the Macdonalds of Dunkeld relations of your husband?"

"No, no," answered Lady D—— with such effort that I feared she was going to be ill.

"However," continued my friend, "whether your relation or not, he is a very pleasing man, and the more interesting to me from his having lost his wife, a very beautiful woman, and under strong suspicion, I believe, of her having committed suicide."

"Well!" exclaimed Lady D——, in a most uncommon tone of voice, and starting from her recumbent posture,—"Well, and does this interesting widower affect great regret for her loss, that your kind heart was so touched in his favour?"

"Yes. It is a blow, I find, which he has never recovered. So his sister says, a very interesting woman, who has lived with him ever since his misfortune, and whose society is his only consolation."

"His sister! are you *sure* she is his sister?"

"There can be no doubt of it; for he is a man of honour, and he has introduced her as such."

"O my dear lord, you think every man as honourable as you are, you are

'Polite, as all your life in courts had been,
Yet good, as tho' the world you'd never seen.'"

And while her lord gallantly and affectionately thanked her for this compliment to his virtues and his manners, she rose from her seat, and with more animation and power than I had lately seen in her, walked across the room with her accustomed dignity, leaning on Lord D——'s arm, while her eyes beamed with a sort of unnatural brightness, and her cheek was flushed also with unnatural beauty.

"My dear lady," said I, "I fear you had better sit down again." And before she could reply to me her countenance changed, she burst into a violent flood of tears, and was glad to be conveyed to her bed as fast as possible. A day or two after, Lord D——, seeing she was quite recovered, told her that he would now own he had promised to meet the Macdonalds again at his friend's house; Mrs. Douglas, the sister of Macdonald, having promised to tell them after dinner, when her brother had an engagement abroad, the whole of his melancholy story; "a story," added Lord D——, "which I am very anxious to hear; for it is, I understand, very romantic and strange, and very affecting; and indeed the uncommonly fine person and manners of Colonel Macdonald make him very fit for a *héros de roman.*"

"Not more," she angrily replied, "than *you* are, *my lord;* for it seems you substitute sentiment for *sensibility*, and had rather listen to a whining and perhaps false tale of romantic distress, than stay by the sick couch of a suffering wife."

Lord D—— on hearing this looked like one bereft of reason, while a "Gracious Heaven! what injustice! I could not have believed it," burst from my lips. Lady D—— saw she had gone too far; and with tears in her eyes she besought her lord, in whose bosom tenderness was struggling with very just resentment, to forgive her ungrateful petulance, and to attribute it to the peevish exacting temper created by disease, heightened a little in this case by the suggestions of jealousy.

"Of jealousy!" we both exclaimed, he with surprise, and I with incredulity.

"Yes," she replied, blushing, and casting her eyes down to avoid my searching glance—"Yes—*jealousy*—for is there not a Mrs. Douglas, a very *interesting sister?*" And while Lord D——, deceived and flattered by this avowal of a feeling which she could not have, hung over her with assurances that there could be to him only one woman in the world, I darted on her a look of indignation, which must have convinced her I saw through the artifice, and despised it. Certain it is, she either *dared* not, or would not, oppose Lord D——'s keeping his engagement, and he left us at the appointed time.

O! could the young, the innocent, and the unwary have beheld, as I did, the agonies which this dear unhappy woman underwent during the absence of her lord, this child and victim of passion and of wrong principles of action, how forcibly would they have been deterred, by this awful, fearful example, from giving way to the influence of passion in any respect! and how completely would they have felt every inclination to blame swallowed up in pity for the sufferings they witnessed!

Several times during the course of the evening she asked me what o'clock it was.—"What! is it no *later?*" she exclaimed. And when, in answer to her question, I told her the hour at a later period, she wildly exclaimed, "don't tell me so, do not tell me the hour of his return is so near!" And though she said nothing, I saw in her at times the almost breathless agonies of suspense, and the mental struggles of justly-founded apprehension. It was very clear that she did not put much restraint upon herself, because she knew that I suspected all was not right; and also, perhaps, because she knew the moment of discovery was probably at hand; and also besause she was tired of playing a part so foreign to her nature. At length we heard Lord D——'s carriage.

"There he is! there he is!" cried the half frantic Rosabel—"but perhaps he will not come hither—not come to see me now!" And as she said this, I hastened to meet him. I found him not quite well, and intending to take the warm bath before he came into his wife's apartment, lest his fatigued look should alarm her. But he inquired most tenderly concerning her, and desired me to say he would come to her as soon as he could; and with this message I returned to her.

"Then you are sure he meant to come, and means to come?" she asked me with an agitated look.

"Most surely; and he inquired after you most tenderly."

"All's well then," muttered she; "but I—I had rather not see my lord till to-morrow, for I am much exhausted, and wish to retire to rest." Accordingly she rung for her attendants, and I saw no more of her, neither did Lord D——, that night. The next morning Lady D—— sent us word that she was too unwell to be disturbed, and should try to sleep as long as she could; and we were not summoned to her dressing-room till evening, and then almost all the light had been excluded on pretence of indisposition.

"How are you this evening?" said Lord D——, seating himself beside the couch.

"Better, much better, or I would not have received you."

"But do you think yourself well enough

to hear the extraordinary recital I have to give?"

"I am sure I hope so," said I, "for my lord has had the cruelty to refuse to let me hear it till your ladyship does, in order to avoid the trouble of telling it twice."

"Yes, my dear lord," answered Lady D—— in a firm tone of voice, but to *me* indicative of the firmness of desperate resolution. "Yes, I am able and willing to hear all you have to tell me, and Mr. Moreton shall not be disappointed. But I will lie down completely, that, if the narrative should be affecting, I may be the better able to endure it."

"It was indeed affecting to me," observed Lord D——. "The commencement of it, indeed, I did not hear; for I was called out to speak to my man as Mrs. Douglas was beginning to relate her brother's falling in love with a beauty, followed up no doubt by the birth, parentage, and education of the said beauty."

"Which detail you did not *hear* then?" asked Lady D——.

"No; but as they were immaterial, I did not require them, as I returned time enough to hear all the needful; for Mrs. Douglas had only got to Colonel Macdonald's happiness, and his bringing her down in triumph to his house at Dunkeld. 'Her talents,' she said, 'were equal to her beauty and her manners; but there was one drawback on her character, namely, a great contempt for the usual restraints laid on her sex, and a great violence of temper, which, when once roused, deprived her of all self-government. For some years, however, the happiness of Mr. and Mrs. Macdonald knew no interruption. But a servant, who, as was afterwards discovered, had conceived a passion for her virtuous master, in a transport of double jealousy, namely, jealousy of her mistress and of another object in the neighbourhood, contrived to infuse the poison of suspicion into the irritable mind of Mrs. Macdonald, who thereby became informed of circumstances which were well calculated to excite suspicion in any wife.'"

"I would thank you, Mr. Moreton," interrupted Lady D——, "to give me those drops." I obeyed, and my friend went on.

"'Now,' said Mrs. Douglas, with a faltering voice and blushing cheek, 'I must bring myself forward, and confess that to my fond folly my poor brother owes all his subsequent misfortunes, and the loss of his beloved wife. I had won the affections of the younger son of Lord H——, and had given him mine in return; but my lover, despairing of obtaining his father's consent, had prevailed on me to marry him privately and unknown to my own family as well as his. But so afraid was he of his father's displeasure, that he made me solemnly swear, whatever it cost me, never to disclose that I was a wife. The consequence of this rash promise was, that when my situation could no longer be concealed, and was disclosed to the eye of my brother, in the first transports of his rage, he upbraided me as a disgrace to my family; but the next moment he kindly promised, on pretence of taking me a journey for the recovery of my health, to place me in some abode where I was wholly unknown, and where I could lie-in unsuspected and undiscovered. He did so. But when on his marriage he went to live at the family seat, where he and I were both personally unknown, he caused me and my child to remove to a house on his estate. But unhappily for him, he could not prevail on himself to disclose the supposed frailty of his sister to his rigidly virtuous wife. Nor indeed did I wish he should. And thus did he, by violating one of the first duties of married people, never to have concealments from each other, lay the foundation of his subsequent misery.'" Here a deep groan from Lady D—— interrupted the recital; but after a few moments she desired Lord D—— to proceed.

"'This unhappy girl, it has since appeared, whom I mentioned before, had watched her master to my house, and had often seen him caressing my child, and often witnessed the great agitation in his manner and in mine; for he was always entreating me to reveal the name of my seducer, as he thought him, and I as firmly persisted in denying his request. However, at last, unable to bear any longer the imputation of guilt while conscious of innocence, I wrote to my husband, requesting leave to confide my marriage to my brother; and, as his father was then very nearly at the point of death, I received from him permission to disclose our real situation to my brother alone, and to remove from his heart the load on his honour which my supposed delinquency had placed on it. Meanwhile, during the time that I was awaiting an answer to my letter, the wretched girl had contrived by some means or other to gain the ear of a woman highly dignified, whom no one would have suspected of listening to the tales of a menial, and she had condescended to follow the servant's example, and dodge, as it is called, her husband to my cottage. She had done this, we now found, more than once. But one unfortunate morning, a morning which I should otherwise have blest, as it allowed me leave to tell my beloved brother that I was not unworthy of him, the deluded Mrs. Macdonald, no longer mistress of her passions, approached the house, and opened the door just as I, now restored to my brother's love, was, for the first time since my supposed fall from virtue, received to his affectionate embrace. For the first time he was kissing me with the pure and repentant tenderness of a long-estranged brother, and when his unhappy wife appeared we were locked in each other's arms! Dear, deceived, unhappy woman! I can well understand and feel for her agonies at that moment! But the sequel is horrible—

Mrs. Macdonald had scarcely beheld a scene so terrible to the feelings of an adoring wife, when she fled with precipitation from our sight; and from that hour to this we have never entirely ascertained her fate. We found, indeed, her cloak and one of her shoes on the bank of a rapid river, and feared it was only too probable that she precipitated herself into it. But though the river was repeatedly and entirely dragged, we never found the body. And as my brother could not be convinced that she had destroyed herself, he, after she had disappeared about two years, caused an advertisement to be put in all the papers, which if it met her eyes she must have understood, importing that if she would return to her afflicted husband, the circumstances now so suspicious would be entirely cleared up, and he who was now considered as guilty would be found as innocent as she herself was. But as no notice was taken of this advertisement, even my brother was at last convinced that his wife was no more, and that she had really perished in the river. And ever since we have been wanderers on the face of the earth, sometimes accompanied by my husband and my child; and sometimes leaving them at some place where the latter might pursue his education, I have travelled with my poor Ronald, from a feeling that it is right to do all to restore that happiness which I was the means of destroying. I have only to add that the servant was so shocked at the sudden disappearance of her mistress, that she fell on her knees and confessed that she it was who had rendered Mrs. Macdonald jealous of my brother and his visits to the cottage, and therefore her unfortunate appearance at so fatal a moment was accounted for.' "

"Is not this a touching story, dearest Rosabel?" said Lord D——; "I saw by the motion of your bosom that it affected you. And —O God!" exclaimed Lord D——, "Moreton, Moreton, come hither! come hither! she is cold, she is dead!"

Nearly as much appalled as himself, I drew nigh, and found that Lady D—— had fainted, and, as I suspected, not without a cause. Her insensibility was indeed so long, that I began to fear she was gone for ever; but at length she revived, and came at once to a full sense and recollection of her situation. Never did I behold a countenance so subdued as hers now was; at first, she did not attempt to speak, but her look spoke volumes of unutterable anguish. At length, however, she seized the hand of her lord, and pressed it repeatedly to her heart and to her lips. There was something of such unwonted humility in this action, that I could not but feel for the deep sensation of self-reproach which it indicated; and though it did not surprise me, it quite bewildered Lord D——, and he tried to escape from a caress, which though it flattered him seemed rather to derogate from her, by taking her in his arms and imprinting a kiss on her pale cold lips! But this tender endearment she forcibly resisted, and with great effort said, "My dear lord, let me beg of you to leave me alone with your good friend and physician here — as I wish to impart to him the symptoms and feelings of which I am conscious."

"By all means," replied Lord D——; and I was left alone with the mysterious wife.

"I believe, my dear sir," said she, "that it is unnecessary for me to inform a man of your penetration who I am; are you not already aware of it?"

"I own," replied I, "that I have my suspicions—you are the lost Mrs. Macdonald."

"You are right. I am that rash, ill-judging, guilty woman. But oh! tell me, I conjure you tell me, in what way I shall break to my much-injured and unsuspecting lord the horrid truth. Will you undertake to prepare his mind, and to break it to him to-night, preparatory to my having a complete explanation with him to-morrow?"

"Most assuredly I will."

"And now, dear sir, will you have the goodness to tell me all that Mrs. Douglas said after she had come to the part in which she described that when I appeared at the door they were locked in each other's arms? for at that moment a sickness like that of death came over me, and I hoped that I should never revive to consciousness more."

I told her all that she required.

"I thank you sir," she replied; "and now I wish to be left alone. You seem to wonder at my calmness; but be assured it proceeds only from my thorough conviction that I shall soon sleep the sleep of death, else I could not endure the consciousness of what I am."

How to answer her I knew not, for I felt that I could not wish her to live. She had, by giving way to the passion of a moment, wrecked the peace of two amiable men, the one my friend and benefactor, and I thought her death was the only reparation she could now make to either. But she softened my heart towards her the next minute by saying, "Believe me, dear sir, that though often pained and perplexed by the acuteness of your observations, I have always done you justice, and estimated as it deserved that attachment to Lord D——, which led you to be so suspicious of me, and so watchful of my looks and words. Oh! I have often regretted that before I accepted Lord D—— I did not confide my sad secret to you. If I had, instead of now being the most miserable, I might still have been one of the happiest of women, and restored to that husband whom I adored with almost idolatrous passion."

Nothing more was necessary than this appeal to my self-love (so weak was my nature, and perhaps so weak is human nature in general,) to melt my heart even to woman's weak-

ness in behalf of this afflicted being; and, instead of answering her, I burst into tears.

"Kind, compassionate friend!" she replied, "though these tears are consoling to me, I beg you to control your emotion. Remember, you have a difficult task to go through, and do not incapacitate yourself to perform it with firmness. You had better leave me now, and prepare for your hard duty. But first," said she, "give me a composing draught; for I mean, if I can, to sleep to-night."

I did as she desired; and then with a very full heart I left her to herself, and went in search of my friend, who, in great agitation, was walking up and down the apartment. When I saw him I could not speak, and he concluded from my emotion that his beloved Rosabel was in imminent danger, and, with frantic vehemence, conjured me to tell him what he had to expect.

"Not what you fear, my dearest lord," replied I; "but I have much to say to you—much, that it will require all your fortitude to support."

"What mean you?" said he, turning very pale.

"Did you never," I continued, "see any thing mysterious in your adored Rosabel's history and manner? Did she never appear to you to have a weight on her mind?"

"Sometimes—"

"Did you never suspect that she had something to conceal? and some strong but secret reason for avoiding being seen, and living as she has done in almost constant seclusion?"

"Never, never; and to what does this strange preamble tend?"

In this way I endeavoured to prepare his mind for what I had to communicate; but there is *no* preparation for great sorrows; and though I had been with Lord D—— before, when he had experienced severe calamity, I had never seen him suffer the agonies which he now did; for there is scarcely a pang so great as that which is inflicted by the conviction of the worthlessness of the being whom we have set up as a faultless object to worship; while that religion, which had, on former occasions, supported Lord D—— through all his trials, now made him suffer the more, from the certainty he experienced, that the woman whom he adored had sinned against every religious restraint and every moral duty.

When it was again morning, I prevailed on him to try to compose himself for the sake of his still idolized Rosabel, who had told me she should request to see him, that she might give him a full explanation of all that had passed. But the day was very far advanced before Rosabel, as I shall in future call her, was herself able to see *him*, though she admitted *me* to her bedside. However, she became more composed towards evening, and we were both summoned to her apartment. I will not attempt to describe the meeting; nor the expressions of agonized tenderness on his side, nor of unavailing penitence and regret on hers, but proceed to her narration, of which I shall, however, only give sufficient to account for much of the conduct I have described which appeared to me unaccountable.

"Though early an orphan," she began, "my parents had lived long enough to spoil me by improper indulgence; and a contempt for all restraint, and an utter aversion to control my temper in any one instance, were coeval nearly with my existence. As I grew up, my beauty became the theme of universal praise wherever I was known; but I must do myself the justice to say, that, being conscious I had talents also, I had the wisdom to pride myself more on this latter possession, than on the perishable one of even consummate loveliness. But, as I liked singularity, my mind unfortunately took a metaphysical turn, and I became deeply read in books not usually known to women; the consequence of which was, that my natural pride and independence of spirit were increased by these fancied powers not usual to my sex; and, being convinced that women were in no respect inferior to men, I began to scorn the slavery in which I thought we were kept by the other sex, and to consider our rights equal, and our duties and virtues the same; while, of all injustice and tyranny, I thought there was none so great as that imposed by the marriage laws as they now stand; though, as I have before said, I honoured my own country for its laws respecting divorce. It was necessary that I should tell you this, to account for my deep resentment of the supposed infidelity of the husband I doted upon, and for the instantaneous resolve which I made, and which *my* ideas of right principle made me adhere to, to quit for ever the man who had thought himself privileged on account of his sex to commit an action which he would have punished with divorce in *me*. But I shrunk from divorcing him, as I fancied I could do, by a legal process, from feelings of wounded pride and wounded delicacy; and, after I had fled never to return, I still resolved to be contented with mere separation from him, and the consciousness that the idea of my suicide would amply revenge me on his affectionate and susceptible nature for the wrong he had done me.

"But I must go back to other times. I was only eighteen when I first saw Macdonald; and if he became at once openly enamoured of me, I beheld him with equal though secret admiration. To be brief; we were married, and for four years, though not blest with children, we were happiest of the happy. Friends I had none, for I liked not the company of women; and till I fell in love I had always maintained that each person was sufficient to his or her own support, and that a mind properly regulated and enlightened required no stay, no sup-

port whatever, whether from friend or relation. But when I learnt to love, I felt that dependence on *one being* was sweeter far than all my boasted independence. In proportion, therefore, to my love and happiness became my deep resentment and my misery, when, in a moment of weakness, I degraded myself so far as to listen to the feigned sorrow and affected sense of duty of a treacherous menial, and learnt to believe this beloved husband a traitor to his vows. I knew that Macdonald earnestly desired children, and I had not borne him a child, but I was informed that this supposed mistress had an infant whom my husband often caressed with the greatest fondness; and unused to conquer any of my feelings, and scorning to win back by patient tenderness the man who dared to wound both my pride and my affection, I resolved to steal upon him in his licentious privacy, regardless of consequences, regardless also in what way I might be induced to indulge my dreadful thirst of vengeance. You know already the result of my jealous visit; and you will own that the sight of my husband clasping a young and beautiful woman, and his supposed mistress, in his arms, was sufficient to rouse a tempest of passion even in the breast of one habitually mild. But the kindness of Mrs. Douglas concealed the action which was the bar to my ever thinking of returning, and which made me wish to be believed no more, but to have perished by my own hand. She did not tell you all; the truth was, that maddened at what I saw, I seized a knife which unhappily lay on the win'ow-seat, and aimed it at the lady; but unsuccessfully, as I saw it fall guiltless of offence at her feet. Immediately ashamed of the attempt at murder, as well as frantic from other causes, I fled with the speed of lightning over paths which I had hitherto thought inaccessible; nay, winged and nerved by desperation, I sprung across a deep wet ditch, which was the boundary of the greatest part of Macdonald's grounds; and before it could be thought possible that I had reached it, I had sought shelter in a cottage, where there lived a poor woman to whom I had done great service; and whom I prevailed upon by a piteous tale of my wrongs, to conceal me till all search for me was over. I next prevailed on her to carry my mantle and one of my shoes to the bank of the river near our grounds; and after being concealed by her a few days, I induced her to abandon her cottage and follow my fortunes.

"I should have been terribly distressed for money, had I not seen in the papers, the very day that this calamity happened, that a share of a ticket I had purchased in the lottery had come up a prize of 20,000*l.* entitling me thereby to 5000*l.* Luckily, as I *then* thought, I had this ticket in my purse, and money enough to frank my companion and myself to London, where I received my money for the ticket, and then proceeded to Wales. There I remained till my poor Janet died; but then, taking a Welch girl into my service, instead of her, I resolved to go abroad. For I could not, even in my moments of relenting tenderness towards my dear though offending husband, prevail on myself to go back into the presence of one who had seen me attempt the life of a fellow-creature; nor could I bear to appear a degraded being in the eyes of him to whom I had been an object hitherto of adoration; neither could I prevail on myself to forgive what *I thought* the *unpardonable crime* of infidelity, and with a woman, too, who, happier far than I, had given him a child, that blessing for which he panted. All these considerations forbade with a voice of thunder my return to what I now feel was the path of duty; and who that has once deviated from it, can be sure of not losing sight of it more widely still? I had passed for a widow nearly two years, living in almost utter seclusion in Wales, when I resolved to go abroad and try if a change of scene would calm a mind which spite of its boasted independence, pined for a kindred mind, and felt, though too late, that the ties of friendship and of kindred are absolutely necessary to existence. It was at this moment, when I had repaired to Falmouth in order to go to Lisbon, that I met with you. And you can now understand all I must have suffered, though you saw it not. But you, Mr. Moreton, observed it all; and now my illness, my emotion, and my agitation at the altar, are accounted for; for though, on my own system, my husband's infidelity had divorced us, I knew that I was about to commit an illegal act, and that my children, if I had any, would be illegitimate. But I had had no child by Macdonald, and I hoped and trusted, my dear lord, I should not have any by you. The reasoning by which I convinced myself it was right to marry you, because I was become necessary to your peace, is so fallacious that I will not repeat it; suffice that I soon found it was impossible for a woman to be happy who was conscious of a secret like mine, and who knew that, if that secret was known, she should be the cause of misery to one of the best of men. But O! what agony did I not endure when I found I should be a mother, and deprive the lawful heir of his inheritance! Had my child lived, I had, however, resolved he never should inherit; for I meant to deposit my confession in some safe hands, to be given you in case of my death, and to be disclosed in case of yours."

"But how," interrupted I, "did you procure that letter of lies from Mrs. M——?"

"By deception, by a complete falsehood; for in so much necessary guilt does one wrong step involve us, that I, to whom falsehood was hitherto unknown, have been forced to plunge into the very depths of fraud. I knew that a distant cousin of mine, Rosabel St. Clair, and esteemed a very handsome as well

as amiable woman, had married a Colonel Macdonald, and had been an exemplary wife to a very bad husband. I also knew that this lady's intimate friend was Mrs. M——, the banker's wife; I learnt from a friend of Mrs. M——'s, whom I occasionally visited in Wales, that Mrs. Macdonald had called on Mrs. M—— to take leave of her before she went to Altona to nurse a brother of hers, who was detained there by bad health. I therefore thought I could, without danger of detection, obtain a seeming testimony to my conduct; which, though not necessary to confirm Lord D——'s good opinion of me, was necessary, I saw, to allay *your* suspicions."

"But how came you not to change your name?"

"From that every feeling of honour shrunk. You will think that I am fantastical in my distinction, and that, having once resolved to deceive, I need not have scrupled at one deception more; but my feelings were against this falsehood, and I was always accustomed to be guided by *them;* besides, in this case, you see, this little instance of honesty was favourable to me, as it enabled me to procure testimonials to the virtue of *a Mrs. Macdonald.*"

"But was the gentleman you met a madman?"

"No; he was the near relation of my husband; and I felt an immediate conviction that the first words he would speak, if I stayed to hear them, would be something that would convince you my husband was alive; and I was never easy afterwards, for I was sure he would inform Macdonald that he had seen me; and I am convinced that nothing but my poor husband's constant change of abode can have prevented his having already received a letter to this effect."

"What was the newspaper that affected you so fatally?"

"An old English newspaper containing the advertisement which invited me back if yet alive, and protested the innocence of my husband. From that moment I resolved, if possible, to procure proofs of this boasted innocence, and, if I procured them, to quit you, my lord, though never to return to *him;* but it was necessary to my peace that I should consider this assurance as a mere lure to get me back again, and as such I at length learnt to consider it. The rest you already know; and I will not pain you and myself by dwelling on my misery, when I heard from lips very dear to me that Macdonald was in the town, and that Lord D—— had met him! a widower, lamenting a beloved wife! But I felt myself comforted and buoyed up again, when I considered that Mrs. Douglas was no doubt the mistress for whom I had been abandoned, as I had never heard him mention having a sister,—a silence which is now accounted for; and it was this supporting resentment that made me rise from my couch with that delirious strength which ended, you may remember, almost as soon as it began; I have now only to say further, that I earnestly desire to be released by death; as I must be doomed during the rest of my life to live a solitary being, though beloved by two of the best of men."

Here Lord D——, who had hitherto sat in perturbed but entire silence, hiding his face in his handkerchief, suddenly arose in violent agitation and left the room.

"For myself," said Rosabel, looking after him with looks of lamenting tenderness, "I feel nothing; I have deserved my misery, and I must learn to bear it; but for those dear ones whose peace I have destroyed, I feel anguish and pity unspeakable."

"Ay; and I almost wish," I replied, "that, as you still might have done, you had kept your sad secret, for my poor friend's sake."

"I could not do it; that conscience, *always* my sole judge and my sole instigator, forbade me, when I knew Macdonald had never in my ideas ceased to be my husband, to live with that noble generous being, to whom I could then, only in my eyes be a mistress. I know," she said, "you will tell me I was only this before. But I thought differently; and it is only by our own ideas of right and wrong that we can stand or fall."

"You are in this instance," answered I, "perfectly just and correct; and it was only for my poor friend's sake that I wished you had not been so, for how will he bear the separation?

"Do you mean to let your existence and your story be known to Macdonald?"

"Spare me," she exclaimed in great emotion, "spare me on this subject, for I am not yet able to talk on it. Remember, I loved, I *adored* my husband; that the idea of his infidelity *maddened* me; and that now, when unable to be reunited to him, I find he was always faithful, always affectionate, and that he is here lamenting me still, and wedded to my memory!"

"You will see him then?"

"I know not yet; for O, Mr. Moreton, think you," she exclaimed, "that *he* would consent to see *me?*"

Here she became so agitated, that a violent fit of coughing came on, which occasioned a most violent return of the bleeding at the lungs; and when I had after many hours of fruitless applications, succeeded in stopping it, her weakness was so great, and her other symptoms so formidable, that I saw a rapid decline awaited her; and I thanked God that it was so! for I knew that neither could my friend, as a virtuous honourable man, continue to live with another man's wife when assured that she was so, nor could she consent to it as a virtuous woman, even if he desired it. Could she return to the husband whom she had injured, without a violation of every deli-

cate feeling, even though he had been willing to receive her. Therefore death was to herself more desirable than life. The misery of my poor friend surpasses all my power to describe, for he could not help still doting with the most devoted fondness on a woman, whom his nice sense of moral rectitude obliged him to consider as unworthy, and whose whole conduct and character had been, he now saw, at variance with those sound principles of action, built on a firm and rational sense of religion, which he had been taught to regard as the only pledge of woman's virtue, and the only security for a husband's honour. Still, the idea of parting with her was insupportable! But he was a little comforted, in spite of his benevolence, by the assurance I gave him that, if she lived, she *never* would return to Macdonald.

Indisposition of a most painful nature, and sufficient nearly to suspend the consciousness of mental suffering, now took possession of this unhappy woman; and in a few days I was convinced that all was nearly over. She had hitherto, and evidently from a generous wish to give up indulging her own feelings at the expense of Lord D——'s, forborne to mention her husband, or to express a desire of seeing him. But when assured by me that her last hour could not be very far distant, such a tide of tenderness overflowed her heart at the thought of Macdonald, the husband of her early love, and the innocent sufferer under her rash and frantic desertion, that she earnestly entreated to be allowed to see him and implore his pardon; nor could she listen, as I endeavoured to make her listen, to the suggestions of generous pity towards him.

"Remember," said I, "that knowing you alive, and finding you thus, will occasion all his old wounds to bleed afresh, and inflict new ones of a most deadly nature. No; have the greatness of mind to make one effort to spare the man you have already afflicted, any more pangs, and let your self-denial in death make atonement for your selfishness in life."

She paused, she cast her eyes upwards as if in prayer, and after a long and deep struggle said, "You have *conquered*; and may Macdonald never even *suspect* that I lived, and lived with another!"

This virtuous resolution completely overset me. I wept over her like a child, and I even reproached myself with cruelty in having exacted this sacrifice from her. But my exertions, and her compliance, were rendered ineffectual by the scene passing below stairs. Colonel Macdonald had called to return Lord D——'s visit, and had entered the hall, not being able to summon any one to the door, just as my friend was passing from one room to another. Consequently they met; and Lord D—— on seeing him started with a sort of convulsive agony, and rushing past him threw himself on a sofa. Colonel Macdonald had heard that Lady D—— was ill; and being able to sympathize only too well with the afflicted husband, he followed him into the parlour, with eyes full of tears, and a cheek pale from sympathetic feeling.

"My dear lord," said Macdonald, "let me conjure you——"

At these words Lord D—— wildly imagining that Macdonald had discovered the secret, and came to claim his wife, started up and exclaimed,

"Sir, I know your rights, and do not mean to dispute them; but *death*, sir, *death* will snatch her from us both; your Rosabel, and *my* Rosabel, is on the bed of *death*, Macdonald!"

"Your Rosabel! and *mine!*" cried the latter, grasping his arm.

"Yes! do you not know that your long-lost Rosabel is now Lady D——, my fancied wife?"

"Villain!" cried Macdonald, nearly choked with passion and amazement; but at this moment *I* rushed in; for one of the servants hearing the violence with which his lord spoke, came to me and told me what he had overheard. What the consequences would have been had I not entered I know not; but I forcibly led Macdonald into another room, and by degrees unfolded the whole story to him. Alas! it would have been heaven to him, to have been able to blame Lord D—— for having deprived him of his wife, compared to what he felt when forced to acknowledge that *his* conduct had been irreproachable, that all the guilt was on the side of Rosabel, and that her long estrangement from him had been entirely voluntary! I was telling him that she had had sufficient consideration for his peace to resolve to let him remain ignorant of her existence, and to deny herself the pleasure of once more beholding him—when he eagerly interrupted me with—

"Pleasure? Did she then *wish* to see me? Does she love me then still? O lead me to her, lead me to her this moment!" I must own that at this instant I thought more of my poor friend's feelings than Macdonald's, and I could not bear to let him see Rosabel unlicensed by him. But the impetuous tenderness of Macdonald could not be restrained. Rosabel, however, guilty, dying, penitent, and fondly desirous of seeing him, was an object which he could not be prevented from approaching; besides, she was his wife, and he had a *right* to see her; and while I struggled with him on the stairs, alarmed also for her safety from the surprise the sight of him would occasion her, his voice exclaiming, "She is my wife, and you shall *not* keep her from me!" reached the ear of Rosabel. Even the faintest tone of that voice so fondly loved could yet vibrate to her heart, which had been faithful even amidst all its wanderings; and starting from the bed on which she was re-

clining, she would have tried to rush to the door, had not Macdonald suddenly stood before her. She gazed on him with such a look of delighted tenderness! such an expressive acknowledgment of the joy the sight of him coming in search of her occasioned her! then throwing herself into his opening arms, Macdonald received and unconsciously pressed to his affectionate heart, as a pale and breathless *corpse*, that Rosabel whom he had last parted with in all the loveliness of consummate beauty!

I shall not attempt to describe the extent of the distress either of my friend or of Colonel Macdonald when I assured them that she was gone for ever; but I must hazard an observation or two on the *duration* of their subsequent grief, which certainly was not in proportion to its *acuteness*; for it is an undoubted fact, that no woman, however beautiful, however intelligent, can be long regretted by a husband, unless fancy, while it recalls her charms, can at the same time dwell with complacency upon her virtues.

Lord D—— could not but remember that his adored Rosabel had deceived and betrayed him into a connexion with a married woman; and Colonel Macdonald, instead of regretting her with tender pity as the victim of love for him, and as a rash but interesting suicide from wounded and frantic affection, now recalled her to his memory as a being of such a perverted state of mind and feelings, as to have lived in conscious adultery with another man.

I am also happy to state, that cured of his former attachment to her memory, he sought and found consolation in a second union.

I had moreover the satisfaction of seeing my beloved friend as happy, at last, as his virtues deserved.

We returned to England, after a residence abroad of three years, by way of *Altona*, where I by accident became acquainted with that Mrs. Macdonald whom the wretched Rosabel had made the means of accomplishing her deception on us, and I interested her not a little in Lord D——'s fate by telling her the story of her erring relative. But I well knew that her name, and certain associations with it, would make Lord D—— averse to be acquainted with, or even to see her; and I confess I was anxious to make known to him that *exemplary wife*, and *well-principled widow*, who had borne her husband's faults, while living, with dignified, silent forbearance and affectionate indulgence, and had even extended her forgiving tenderness so far, as to screen his *memory* from reproach.

One day we met her in the streets of Altona, and being struck with admiration of her beauty, he asked who she was.

"It is Mrs. Macdonald," replied I; and, as I expected, Lord D—— shuddered and passed rapidly on; but when he got to some distance, he turned his head round and looked after her.

We met her again the next day, and I found that he was struck with the family resemblance which she bore her cousin; for I heard him say, "How like!" as he turned away while I stopped to speak to Mrs. Macdonald.

"I wish you would let me present you to her," I ventured to say. But he eagerly replied, "By no means, it would be too painful to me." I did not urge the subject further; for I knew that Mrs. Macdonald was to sail with us in the same packet for England, and that therefore an introduction must sooner or later take place. I was right in my expectations; and as Lord D—— was seized with a severe illness as soon as we embarked, Mrs. Macdonald's knowledge of those little services and attentions so soothing and welcome to invalids made her a most valuable acquisition to us; and though she did not give Lord D—— any personal attendance, I took care to let him know the comforts he received were of her preparing and providing. Nor was it long before I heard him ask me, after he had been sitting up in order to give her his thanks in person, if I was not struck with her likeness to one very dear to him.

"To be sure," I replied, "and I recollect that they were distant cousins."

"You mistake me," he eagerly answered, deeply blushing; "I meant that she is like my wife, my dear Emily!" O how my heart bounded with joy to hear this! as I knew that, whenever women or men begin to see, or to fancy that they see, a resemblance to their first wedded companion, they are excusing to themselves a wish, only scarcely known as yet perhaps to their own hearts, of making the supposed resemblance the successor to the resembled.

To be brief; Mrs. Macdonald, without I believe seeing in Lord D—— any resemblance to *her* husband, consented to marry him as soon as he requested her to do so, and their union was a happy one.

Her name was Rosabel Janet; but by the former name she was, for obvious reasons, never called after she married Lord D——; and all recollections of the unfortunate Rosabel, her namesake, we banished as much as possible.

At the moment that I write this, Lord and Lady D—— are looking forward with great joy to the union of their only child, Miss H——, with the only son of Lord D——'s heir at law, mentioned in the beginning of these memoirs.

These memoirs themselves, I have written with a view to their being published when I, and those to whom the publication might recall unpleasant feelings, shall be removed from mental consciousness,—and——

Here the manuscript breaks off abruptly; but I have given it to the world as it is, and I shall leave my readers to draw their own moral from the story, a story which, as was stated in the first page of it, though certainly 'le vrai,' is not the 'vraisemblable.'

APPEARANCE IS AGAINST HER.

"WHAT shall we do?" said a rich banker, a very busy and zealous politician in the city of W——, to a gentleman of considerable importance who lived in the neighbourhood; "Parliament is dissolved, the writ is expected down every day, and we have not yet found a candidate to oppose our unpopular member; therefore, he will be returned again, merely for want of some one to set up against him."

"Why not stand yourself?" replied Sir James.

"Why do you not follow the advice you give?"

"I would, if my health would allow of it. But let us not waste these precious moments; let us endeavour to find some one likely to suit our purpose. Ha! fortunate, indeed! I see a very proper person yonder."

"Whom do you mean, Sir James? that young officer?"

"Yes—Colonel Vane."

"Is that the Colonel Vane who distinguished himself on the continent so much by his personal bravery when quite a youth; and who made himself adored the other day, even by the rioters against whom he was called to act, by the mercy with which he tempered justice?"

"The very same. He is come hither on a visit to Captain Clinton, who is recruiting here; and as he is a man of independent fortune, and is moveover a well-known and popular character, I think, if he would come forward, he might have a chance of succeeding."

"Then, as you know him, Sir James, suppose you ask him to offer himself?"

"With all my heart," he replied; and accordingly they went in pursuit of Colonel Vane.

"Is it possible, gentlemen," said Colonel Vane, when their wishes were made known to him, "that you can be serious in this application?"

"Quite serious, sir," replied Mr. Linwood. "The truth is, we are in great want of a proper person to oppose to one of our present members whom we earnestly wish to turn out."

"And you think *me* a proper person?"

"Certainly,—a gallant officer, a well-known and popular character, and a man of independent fortune."

"Mr. Alton, our present member, does the business of our city very ill, and—"

"Excuse my interrupting you, sir — but surely it would be better to have the business of your city done *ill*, than not done at all; and a man in my profession is liable to be sent abroad, and to be unable to do any of his parliamentary business."

"Very just," returned Mr. Linwood; "but we want to get Mr. Alton out at all events; his political principles are obnoxious to us, and——"

"So then, sir, it is not his neglect of business, but his *politics* that have made you his enemy; you have quitted your original ground, sir,—and pray, what do you know of *my* politics? I can assure you that not even the certainty of displeasing my constituents for ever, would induce me to give a vote, or utter a sentiment, contrary to my conscience."

"No doubt, sir, no doubt, — a perfectly honest man, I dare say, and we ask nothing more."

"But it seems, sir, that your present member, Mr. Alton, is equally honest, as he has ventured to put forth and act on opinions hostile to yours."

Mr. Linwood, who, like most violent politicians, was as much actuated by his personal dislikes as his political principles in his exertions on such occasions, was not quite ready with an answer to this observation from the Colonel, when two shopkeepers, near whose doors they were standing, came out, and, addressing Mr. Linwood, begged to know if an opposition was expected.

"Certainly, certainly," replied Mr. Linwood, "there will be an opposition, and we hope to prevail on this gentleman to stand. But don't let us stay here,—let us walk into Mr. Dodd's shop, as I see some voters sitting in it;" and Colonel Vane had the complaisance to follow him. Mr. Linwood immediately began a long panegyric on the virtues of Colonel Vane, in which he was seconded by Sir James; and when he had ended, he begged the Colonel would say a few words for himself.

"You have said so many," replied he, "and of such a nature, that my modesty is so overcome, I am of necessity silent; but I suppose you wish to have a specimen of my canvassing powers; therefore I shall say, Gentlemen, if I stand candidate for this ancient and honourable city, I hope you will give me your votes."

The persons to whom he spoke one and all assured him that their votes were already promised to the old members in case of an opposition; and Colonel Vane bowed, and was retiring; but Mr. Linwood, catching his arm to detain him, began to expostulate, and was requesting them to "think better of it," when Colonel Vane rather indignantly exclaimed, "Sir, did not you hear the gentlemen say that they had *promised* their votes already?"

"Yes, sir, yes; but promises and pie-crust, as the saying is, are made to be broken, you know; and I dare say your eloquence would prevail on them to break theirs.—Do try."

"Never, sir, never. What! make a proposal to others which I should resent as a personal insult if made to myself?"

Mr. Linwood looked angry and disconcerted—and Sir James saying, "I see you are

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untractable, and will make a wretched canvasser," quitted the spot; while one of the voters addressed Colonel Vane with "God bless you, sir,—I see you are quite a gentleman, and I am sorry I cannot vote for you."

Colonel Vane replied by a very graceful bow, and followed Sir James, accompanied by Mr. Linwood.

"I hope, sir, you are now convinced that I am more likely to mar than further your wishes?" said Colonel Vane smiling; on which Mr. Linwood, coldly saying he must certainly seek a candidate elsewhere, bowed and took his leave, no longer prejudiced in favour of this popular and well-known character.

But different was the effect which the dialogue, such as it was, had had on a very attentive though unseen listener. The mistress of the house into which the Colonel and his companions had entered, had been lady's-maid to a young and beautiful orphan heiress, who resided near the town; and this lady having called to inquire concerning the sick child of her quondam servant, had seated herself in the parlour behind the shop, and was kindly endeavouring, in the temporary absence of the mother, to get the infant to sleep on her lap, when the gentleman entered and began their canvass. The door was open, and she was placed behind it; but though unseen herself she had a full view of Colonel Vane, who was well known to her by reputation, and she not only heard his name announced, but every word that he uttered,—words which derived new power from an expression of countenance finer in her eyes than any that she had yet beheld; "and this is the man," thought Miss Mordaunt, "whom I have so long wished to see! this the gallant soldier, the humane commander, the pious son, the generous brother, so often the theme of praise amongst those whose praise is honour!" and she sat lost in reverie, after the object of it had vanished from her sight; when the mistress of the house entered the room, roused her to recollection, and, taking from her her sleeping charge, left her at liberty to depart. She was taking her leave, when she saw Colonel Vane and Sir James slowly walk past the door, which was on the fashionable parade for gentlemen, and she knew that, if they returned again, she must meet them on her way to a house where she had left the lady who lived with her as a companion. Immediately a feeling of flutter and bashfulness came over the usually unembarrassed Ella; and doubting the propriety of being seen alone on a sort of public walk, though it could be only for a *moment*, she almost resolved to watch her opportunity, and steal out when the Colonel and Sir James were gone by. But other feelings prevented this; and pulling her veil in full folds about her face, she sallied forth, casting a timid look of inquiry round.

The gentlemen in question were at a little distance from her, but stopping to speak to Mr. Linwood, who had again joined them; and as Ella drew near, she saw that Colonel Vane was earnestly looking at her, and could not doubt but that the whisper he was addressing to Sir James Morritt was an inquiry who she was. In an instant her usual bloom was several shades deeper than before, her motion became embarrassed, and she made a passing curtsy to the baronet, without that easy grace which usually distinguished her.

It was unfortunate for Ella that Sir James and Mr. Linwood were at that moment the companions of Colonel Vane; as Mr. Linwood disliked her because she had always repressed the advances of his pert and forward sons, and Sir James was one of her rejected admirers. It was not likely, therefore, that Colonel Vane would hear her named with much praise; and such were the thoughtless gaiety and indiscretion of our orphan, that much might be said against her by those whose comments are not apt to be softened by indulgence and candour.

Ella was right. Colonel Vane did whisper to the baronet, "Who is that very fine young woman?" just as she passed and curtsied to him.

"You know, don't you, baronet?" said the familiar Mr. Linwood, winking his eye at the Colonel, "nobody better."

"Certainly, sir," replied Sir James, not pleased at the hint, "it is Miss Mordaunt of Bower Wood."

"That! is that Miss Mordaunt? I have heard *much* of her," observed the Colonel, eagerly.

"And if you have heard the truth, you have not heard much good of her," said Mr. Linwood.

"What do you mean, sir?" asked Colonel Vane. "It is impossible that Miss Mordaunt's reputation can be otherwise than unblemished."

"No; to be sure," said Sir James, "all that can be said against her is, that she is the greatest coquette in Christendom."

"And is that really the case?" demanded Colonel Vane, with an air of mortification.

"To be sure it is," replied Mr. Linwood, "as that good gentleman and a hundred others can testify. I do verily believe that she would be delighted to hear that her charms had driven two rival lovers to slugs in a saw-pit, and who can say to what harm coquetry may not lead! Now this I call hearing no good of a woman, if you heard the truth."

"I am very much of your opinion on this subject, sir," replied the Colonel.

"Besides, she is a terrible dasher, and draws caricatures, and writes satirical verses; and not contented with displaying her fine person at an assembly in a country-dance, she can't be contented without showing off in a

ree! of three. To be sure she is a beautiful creature, both face and figure; as to her *bloom, that*—you understand me. Heh! Colonel."

"Has she recourse to art already?" replied Colonel Vane. "In how different a light has she been represented to me!" At this moment the object of these censures again appeared in sight, and, being now leaning on the arm of a companion, had lost much of the conscious awkwardness she had before exhibited, and walked with her usual dignity and ease.

"It is a very fine day, ladies," said Sir James, bowing coldly. "Unusually so for the time of year," replied Ella, blushing deeply, as she observed the earnest look of inquiry with which Colonel Vane beheld her. The eye averted with feminine modesty, the cheek suffused with sudden crimson, and the tone of voice sweet as the "shepherd's pipe upon the mountains," had their full effect upon Colonel Vane, and almost led him to doubt the truth of what his companions had asserted. At this moment the wind blew off Ella's veil, and her whole face was disclosed to him in all its glowing beauty.

"There is something most uncommonly charming in her appearance," said Colonel Vane when Sir James rejoined him.

"There is indeed," said Sir James; "so take care of your heart, Vane, and be warned by my fate; for *I* was charmed like many others; and presuming on such encouragement as no man could mistake, I offered, and was rejected; though every one told me, it was plain that she had refused other men on my account."

"I will bear witness," said Mr. Linwood, "to her paying you, Sir James, such attention as a man could not look off, indeed."

"Dreadful!" exclaimed the Colonel; "so young, so beautiful, and so unprincipled!"

"Yet," observed Sir James, "I will bet a wager, that when you know her, such are her powers of fascination, you will be her captive yourself, and learn to consider us as vile calumniators."

"Impossible, sir!" gravely returned the Colonel, "for I will *not* know Miss Mordaunt; I will not expose myself to the danger and the misery of having my senses charmed by a woman whom my moral feelings and my judgment must reject with contempt and aversion." So saying, he wished them good morning and left them.

"I 'd bet a good round sum that she catches him for all that," said Mr. Linwood, "and I vow I should like to see it. Your friend is a sad preaching fellow, Sir James, with his conscience, and his moral feelings. But, good bye—I have heard, I hope, of a candidate; and I must nail him if I can; and do you go and tell our friends that I have some one in my eye." On which they separated, while the Colonel and Ella proceeded to their respective homes; each, though with very different feelings, dwelling on the image and the qualities of the other.

Colonel Vane at a very early age had been adopted by his uncle, General Vane; and as his parents had a daughter only one year younger than their son, they were soon reconciled to a separation, which was so likely to be conducive to the welfare of their child; for they had no fortune themselves, and that of the General was considerable. By Mrs. Vane, indeed, the loss of her son's society was much less felt than by his father; for she adored her husband, and loved him with such an exclusive and devoted affection, that provided he was with her, every wish of her heart was gratified, and almost every other object in life vanished from her consideration. She loved him as the truly pious wish to love their Creator; but, not so enviable as the latter, the object of *her* devotion was a mortal and perishable being, and the result of her affection was not the hope of future good, but the certainty of present misery. When Edmond Vane was fifteen, his father, who was on a visit to General Vane, then in decaying health, was drowned in saving the life of his son, who had been upset in the middle of a wide and rapid river with bags of shot in his pockets, which weighed him down as soon as he endeavoured to swim. The unhappy parent upheld his son till his safety was secure by a rope thrown to him by a spectator on the shore; but, exhausted by his efforts, he sunk himself never to rise again, before he could receive similar aid. The grief of Edmond Vane, though as violent and as lasting as his father's death and the mode of it could render it, was slight in comparison of the deep despair of the unhappy widow; while in the paroxysm of her agonies, she could scarcely be prevented from vowing never to behold the child who had been, though innocently, the cause of his father's death. Nor were these feelings combated by the usual power of parental affection; because, as her son had never lived with her, her maternal tenderness towards him had never been properly called forth; he had therefore purchased his expected and soon inherited fortune by the loss of something, as he himself thought, more valuable—namely, a mother's love. General Vane did not long survive his brother, and he left a very handsome property to Edmond Vane, desiring in his will that he should take possession of it at eighteen, provided that he immediately entered the army, and followed the profession of a soldier.

The first act of Edmond Vane's majority was to divide his income with his mother, whose circumstances were excessively narrow, and to settle an independent fortune on his sister. But even this act of filial piety could not soften his mother's heart in his favour sufficiently to induce her to see him. "I ho-

nour, I admire, I bless, and I pray for him," she said, "but I cannot see, I cannot live with him." He however saw his sister occasionally, and not long after he followed her to her grave, cut off in the bloom of seventeen by a sudden affection of the lungs. His mother bore this new calamity far better than *he* did. Absorbed still in one overwhelming grief, her heart was not alive to a second,—nor yet could the loss of her daughter reconcile her to the idea of seeing her son. About this time one of her own relations died, and left her a large personal property; and perhaps she was gratified with being no longer forced to owe pecuniary obligations to that child whose filial love she could not adequately return. She was however at last prevailed upon to see him; and before he went abroad to fight the battles of his country, he had the satisfaction of obtaining his mother's blessing, and being clasped, however unwillingly, in her maternal embrace.

When Colonel Vane returned from abroad, he was permitted to see her again, but his presence continued to remind her so forcibly of the misfortune which he had been the innocent means of bringing upon her, that he felt conscious she rather endured than liked his society; and therefore filial piety made him at length forego the indulgence which filial affection coveted. This disappointment to his feelings, and another of a more painful nature, had given a pernicious shade to his character; and, by injuring his own capability of permanent happiness, had weakened if not destroyed his power to form the happiness of another. When his uncle, his father, and his sister died, and his mother refused to admit him to her presence, Edmond Vane found himself in the most painful of all situations to an affectionate heart; for he had no object to love, no one to live for,—and he pined in the bloom of existence for some one to whom he could turn with the yearnings of interest and tenderness. At this moment, and while his mind became saddened and distrustful from the consciousness that, less fortunate than his fellow-creatures, maternal tenderness to him, and him alone, was a name, he was thrown by accident into the society of a very artful and beautiful woman several years older than himself. To this well-practised coquette he became immediately an object for her power to be exercised upon, and she began to spread her toils with as much eagerness, though less ability than usual; for it required little art to fascinate an inexperienced youth, to whom the accents of affectionate regard from the soft voice of woman were irresistible, because hitherto unexperienced; and while her beauty dazzled his senses, and her attentions flattered his vanity, the almost caressing familiarity of her manner gratified his feelings, and excited his grateful affection. He fancied and he *called* his feelings *love*;—but he was mistaken.—The lady herself fancied them so too.—However, having gained the prize, and heard the declaration of his fondness, she rejected it as not worth keeping, as her ambition looked to a much higher connexion; and while the unhappy Edmond was enduring all the agonies of disappointed passion, she accepted the hand of an old and decrepit nobleman, and the unprincipled coquette naturally enough became the adulterous wife.

It was unlikely that a trial of this nature, and the contemplation of a character such as Lady L.'s, should tend to retard the influence of that jealousy, suspicion, or distrust, which were beginning to steal over the wounded mind of Edmond Vane, and to poison his enjoyment of female society by weakening his confidence in woman. But though he closed his heart rigidly against the attractions of the sex, he longed earnestly, at the same time, to surrender that heart whenever his caution and his judgment should sanction the wishes of his affections. Meanwhile, too well-principled to seduce an innocent woman, too moral and too refined to associate with a depraved one, he remained a single and unattached individual, vainly endeavouring to find out a woman whose manners should be such as to satisfy his almost diseased nicety of feeling. Such was the state of his mind when he first came to W——, and saw Ella Mordaunt, of whom he had heard so exalted a character, that he almost believed she would prove the being whom he had so long sought, till he reflected that he had heard her praises chiefly from a woman whose manners, were she *his* wife, would make him frantic with jealousy, and from a man who was going to marry this woman with all the joyful certainty of confiding affection.

"No, no," said Edmond Vane to himself, "Clinton's opinion of women and mine are too opposite, for me to trust to him implicitly;" and no sooner was he arrived on a visit to this very Clinton, than the character given of Ella by Sir James and Mr. Linwood sufficiently proved that his distrust was well founded.

Ella Mordaunt was indeed of all women the worst calculated, in the then existing style of her manners, to be the chosen mistress and the wife of a jealous and suspicious man. She had lost her parents at an early age; but their loss had been well supplied to her by the watchful care and judicious tenderness of an aunt, who, having met with a disappointment in love, had resolved never to marry, and had devoted herself to the education of her young and interesting charge. Humble herself from piety, and benevolent from nature, the instructress of Ella Mordaunt laboured so incessantly to make her pupil a stranger to the pride and self-importance commonly instilled into heiresses, that she impelled her into a contrary extreme; and the heiress of Bower Wood, fine-tempered and benevolent as her preceptress

herself, became only too affable and too easy of access; and her wish to please, and make all persons satisfied with themselves, was so general and so active, that her manner was too indiscriminately kind to gratify the pride of the consciously deserving, and resembled more that self-interested and universal civility requisite in the candidate at an election, than the unenforced urbanity of an independent gentlewoman. It was this manner, whose fascinations were exercised upon and equally felt by persons of all ranks and ages, which, as Ella grew up and was introduced more into the world, not only gained her the reputation of a determined coquette, but, as she felt the universal influence which it gave, excited in her that very spirit of coquetry of which she was at first innocent,—while her alarmed and astonished monitress could almost have exclaimed with Albini in Count Basil:

"————Every blessing with thee go,
My most tormenting and most pleasing charge!
Like vapour from the mountain stream art thou,
Which lightly rises on the morning air,
And shifts its fleeting form with every breeze,
For ever varying, and for ever graceful,
Endearing, generous, bountiful, and kind;
Vain, fanciful, and fond of worthless praise;
Courteous and gentle———"
"But such a witching mien thy follies show,
They make a very idiot of reproof,
And smile it to disgrace. What shall I do with thee?"

But the solicitudes and the pride of affection were destined soon to close for this most excellent woman. Early decay, the consequence of early and concealed uneasiness, surely though slowly undermined her existence; and Ella once more, and more consciously than before, an orphan, was doomed to follow her only dear relation, her more than mother, to an untimely grave. The place in her family was indeed soon filled up by another relation; but not so the place in her heart; that place which positive qualities of a most distinguished nature had given her lost relative a right to possess exclusively. Her successor had *no* positive qualities. She was not ill-natured, not unpleasant, not uncultivated; and if not an agreeable, no one could say she was not a respectable superintendent of the family, and chaperone to the mistress of Bower Wood.

The day after Ella Mordaunt had seen Colonel Vane, there was to be a public assembly at W——; and little knowing the true character of the man whom she was eager to know and anxious to please, she began the business of her toilette with much more interest than usual, because she hoped to shine before that being, whose approbation would, she knew, exalt her in her own opinion. Hitherto she had only felt a vague wish to charm generally, but never particularly; nor had she ever given Sir James, or any one, such encouragement as warranted their accusing her of dishonourable conduct. But he, like others, had been the dupe of his own vanity; and pique had led him, while speaking of her, to exaggerate her advances and apparent approbation, in order to heal some of the wounds which his self-love had received.

"I think Clinton will present him to me," said Ella to herself, "and perhaps he will ask n e to dance,—and yet I would rather he should not dance, even with *me;* I would rather he should sit out and talk. I should not like to see so *respectable* a man *dance.*"

Colonel Vane in the meanwhile was preparing for the ball, but without either of the intentions which Ella imputed to him. He was resolved not only not to dance with her, but not even to be presented to her; and while he recalled with admiration the beauty of her face and figure, and the touching tone of her voice, he felt absolutely angry with her for not being in mind as admirable as she was in person. "But does it signify to me," said he to himself, "what her conduct or character is? To me, they must be a matter of indifference;" while this boast of indifference was a proof of the contrary, and proved that Clinton's and his Anna's frequent commendations of Ella had not been without effect.

At length, the hour of going to the ball arrived, and Colonel Vane saw Ella, contrary to his expectations, modestly and simply attired, enter the room leaning on her relation's arm. Ella, though she did not positively look at Colonel Vane, perceived that he was near her, and was quite provoked at feeling that she was fluttered at the consciousness. "For what is he to me?" said she internally; and rallying her self-command, she advanced most graciously to meet a gentleman of her acquaintance, giving him both her hands with condescending courtesy, and receiving his bows and smiles with animated pleasure.

"There," thought Colonel Vane, "she is coquetting already; what man would not be flattered and led on by such encouragement? No; I see Mr. Linwood was right, and Clinton is a blind and weak idolater."

Had he waited longer on that spot, he would have seen Ella receive as cordially her female friends, and even bestow as gracious smiles, and as low a bow of the head or curtsy, on the fiddlers who were known to her; so much more was her kindness the result of manner, and of a benevolent wish to please, than an intention to mislead or improperly notice any one. But, full of disgust, he walked away to the other end of the room, lamenting she had so much beauty, because it would enable her to do so much mischief. Ella, whose eyes watched his motions though they did not seem to do so, was conscious of his removal and his distance, and her animation ceased. Soon after she saw Clinton go up to his friend and whisper him; and with a beating heart she prepared for an introduction. But in vain; she saw Clinton apparently expostulate with

Colonel Vane, and at length turn away abruptly, as if indignant. "If he should have refused to be presented to me!" thought Ella, "if he should not like my appearance!" and almost with tears in her eyes she accepted the offered hand of a young nobleman quartered in the town, and joined the dance. But the gloom which had overspread her brow began to disperse; when she saw Colonel Vane draw near the dancers as soon as she had reached the top of the set, and evidently with a view to observe her; while her consciousness that he was gazing at her gave a degree of timidity to her manner, which, though she knew it not, was more likely to please her fastidious observer than even the great excellence which her dancing exhibited. Colonel Vane almost unconsciously followed her with his eyes, even to the end of the set, and could not help saying to himself, "Is this the dashing showing-off dancer whom Mr. Linwood described? I never saw a more modest performer in my life; and her petticoats, instead of being calculated for display, are only just short enough for convenience! That brilliant colour is not, *cannot be* natural,—that I admit;—but in respect to her mode of dancing, he is quite mistaken;—and how beautiful she is! Why does she not trust to nature?" While these thoughts were passing in his mind, they gave a complacent expression to his countenance as he looked at Ella, which she, as she timidly glanced her eyes over it, could not fail to perceive; and regaining all her animation, and those animal spirits which so often led her to the very verge of impropriety, she began to talk, to laugh, to flirt as usual, and Colonel Vane, regaining all his prejudices against her, once more turned away angry and disgusted; and she danced down the second dance unheeded by him; or, if noticed, she saw no longer on his face the unconscious smile of involuntary approbation.

As soon as the set was ended, and Ella had made her parting curtsy to her partner, she went in search of her relation, Mrs. Anne Mordaunt, who was at cards in an adjoining room; and having borrowed her housewife, that lady, like all ladies of the good times past, being provided with pockets, and all the convenient paraphernalia of thimble, scissors, &c. she retired behind a large screen, which was placed between the card-tables and the door, in order to fasten the loops of her sandals, which had come unsown in the dance. While thus employed, the door of the room opened, and she heard Captain Clinton exclaim, "Stop, Vane, stop,—one word more. Do not be obstinate,—let me present you to Miss Mordaunt."

"Never," replied Colonel Vane, "never,—she is an arrant coquette,—and what I have seen confirms the character I have heard of her."

"This is all prejudice," replied Clinton in a low voice, "and if you knew her, you would adore her."

"The beauty I might; but believe me, my judgment would despise the *woman*."

"She has been calumniated."

"No; have I not eyes?"

"But they may be deceived if they look through the medium of prejudice. Come, do let me present you, and take her by the hand for two dances."

"What, I! I take the hand which has been pressed familiarly, and as if a pressure of the hand was a mere matter of course, by almost every man in the room?"

"Well. And should an innocent woman think this very common freedom a matter of importance?"

"Mighty fine! So then your motto is, I suppose, 'With the pure all things are pure! Cela pourroit mener bien loin mon ami.'

"No. I will not be presented to this excelling, but in my eyes unrespectable beauty; but after I have looked over the card-players a little while, I shall go home." So saying he advanced in front of the screen, while Ella slipped round it unperceived; and hearing Captain Clinton shut the door, muttering "Confounded obstinacy!" as he did so, she gently opened it, then, scarcely able to stand, leaned for support against the wall of the passage leading from the card to the ball-room. She had stood there a minute or two, endeavouring to recollect herself, and banish from her mind the cruelly severe expressions which she had just overheard; when Captain Clinton, who had been in search of her, returned, intending to ask Mrs. Anne, whither Miss Mordaunt had vanished. The moment he beheld her, the deadly paleness of her cheek and her disordered countenance filled him with apprehension, and he eagerly asked her what had happened. Instead of answering him, she burst into tears; and a suspicion of the truth coming across his mind, he was just going to interrogate her as closely as delicacy would allow him, when one of the waiters came running to him exclaiming, "Sir! sir! an express is come for you, sir! and you must go off directly to ———;" and Captain Clinton, saying "I will return instantly," did not wait to hear any more, but ran in search of the express.

Ella meanwhile alarmed lest Clinton should have been sent for to the lady to whom he was engaged, who was her intimate friend, remained where she was, awaiting his return! but in spite of her efforts, and the whispers of apprehensive friendship, her own wounded delicacy, her own offended self-respect, were uppermost in her thoughts, and she was relapsing into tears, when the door of the card-room opened, against which she was unconsciously leaning, and she was nearly thrown down,—while the person who eagerly caught her to save her from falling proved to be Colonel Vane himself! As soon as Ella saw

to whom she was thus indebted, she sprung from him with involuntary indignation.

"Good heaven! I hope I have not hurt you, madam?" he exclaimed. "I was quite unconscious any one was leaning against the door. But you are pale; you seem faint,—pray, pray, let me support you!" while Ella, making one great effort, tried to reach the door of the ball-room; but overcome with a variety of emotions, her head grew giddy, and she grasped Colonel Vane's arm for support; till one of the waiters, seeing her situation, brought her a chair and some water. The illness was, however, momentary. Ella's recollection returned; and angry as she was with Colonel Vane, her resentment was a little softened by the anxious kindness with which he hung over her, and watched her returning colour,—that colour which he now saw he had unjustly imagined to be artificial, and which confusion, indignation, and strong emotion were bringing back in mantling blushes to her cheek.

"I am shocked—I am ashamed,—I cannot stay here," cried Ella rising, but reseating herself, as her limbs trembled still. "Will you allow me, madam," said Colonel Vane, "to inform the lady I saw with you of your illness?" while he was pleased to find she was properly alive to the awkwardness of her situation; and without waiting for her permission, he went in search of Mrs. Anne Mordaunt, who resigning her cards to a bystander anxiously followed where he led; and Colonel Vane, convincing himself that it was proper to leave the ladies to themselves, walked up and down the lobby at too great a distance to hear, but near enough to see them. At length Ella recovered herself sufficiently to tell Mrs. Anne that she was very anxious to know why Captain Clinton did not return, and to whom he was sent for; and as that lady was looking round in search of some one to send to inquire, Colonel Vane, thinking she wanted something, came up and offered his services, though, when he heard what Mrs. Anne required, he could not help being a little uneasy himself at the absence of his friend. The result of his immediate inquiries was, that Captain Clinton, finding the express came from his father, who was supposed to be dying, had instantly snatched off the servant's hat, jumped upon the servant's horse, and forgetful of Ella, and of every thing but the situation of a beloved parent, had ridden off as fast as he could.

"I am happy to inform you, madam," said Colonel Vane when he returned, "that it is not the illness of your friend which has summoned him away; but I am sorry to say he is gone to see his father, who is supposed to be at the point of death."

Ella bowed, but spoke not; and Mrs. Anne twaddled about green old age, and being here to-day and gone to-morrow.

"Had you honoured me so far, madam," said Colonel Vane, "as to tell me the cause of your emotion and illness, I could have removed it sooner."

Ella, too sincere, too devoted to the rigid practice of truth, to allow him to attribute to sensibility on account of her friend, an emotion which certainly flowed from a very different source, blushing deeply, replied that her alarm concerning her friend had not been the cause of her illness, though it might probably increase it.

"Nay now, my dear," said Mrs. Anne, "why deny an excess of feeling for others which distinguishes you, and does you so much honour?—That is so like you!"

"I hope it is not like me," replied Ella, "to tell a falsehood.—My illness, or my emotion rather, had not, I assure you, so rational a source."

"Perhaps, perhaps, madam," said Colonel Vane, "I frightened and *hurt* you by opening the door, and nearly throwing you down?—If so, I should not easily forgive myself."

"Indeed, sir," returned Ella, faintly smiling at his alarm lest he had injured her person, and his unconsciousness of the serious injury he had done her mind,—"*indeed*, sir, you did not hurt, and scarcely did you alarm me; and my only danger, from your opening the door so suddenly, proceeded from my previous weakness."

"Well, it is very strange, my dear," said Mrs. Anne, "that you, of all persons in the world, should be taken thus faint and queer like a fine lady!—You were never so before."

"No,—and I hope never to be so again, dear cousin," replied Ella, trying to be gay; while Colonel Vane's eyes were fixed upon her with anxious inquiry. "Shall I call your coach, ladies?" said he; "surely the heat of the room will be too much for an invalid." But Ella, pleased perhaps to remain where she felt herself an object of interest, spite of his prejudices, to this severe censor of her conduct, declined the offer, and, declaring she was quite well again, re-entered the ball-room, leaning on Mrs. Anne Mordaunt. "If I might so far presume, madam, as to offer you my arm," said the Colonel. But Ella, in no very flattering tone replied, "I thank you, sir, but I require no further assistance from you."

"So, so!" thought Colonel Vane; "she is not disposed, I see, to spoil *me*, whatever she may do *other people*, by her *graciousness!*"

When they entered the room, Ella declined all offers to dance, and was soon seated with some friends of both sexes at the end of the room, who formed a circle round her; and one of them being known to Colonel Vane, he was asked to join the party. "I will," said he, blushing, as he spoke, at his own versatility, "I will,—if you will do me the honour to present me first to those ladies," bowing to Ella and her cousin, "for without having had that honour I have presumed to address them."

And Ella, though surprised and gratified beyond measure, made her curtsy and received his bow with a degree of formality which astonished Mrs. Anne, who was already half in love with this celebrated and charming man.

At this moment a young lady came running up to Ella, to beg that she would indulge her so far as to dance a reel of three with her, as a large party had stayed on purpose to see it. Ella immediately replied,—"I was very unwell just now, Miss Tyrrell, and have declined dancing any more this evening; but that is not the reason of my refusing to comply with your request. I never will make such a public exhibition of myself again."

"Dear me! Why, you did it at the last assembly!"

"Yes; but contrary both to my inclination and my judgment, and I have never forgiven myself, as Mrs. Anne can testify, for having had the weakness to be over-persuaded to do what my ideas of propriety forbade."

When she first began to speak, Colonel Vane absolutely *started*, and fixed his eyes on her face with gratified surprise; and when she had ended, he could hardly forbear *thanking* her for the pleasure she had given him.

"What a liar that Linwood is!" thought Colonel Vane. The young lady was not, however, as well satisfied with Ella's discretion as he was; but saying she thought Miss Mordaunt more nice than wise, and it was very hard, for she could not dance the reel without another lady, she, with a saucy toss of her head, departed in search of a more obliging person.

But the Colonel's faith in Mr. Linwood's descriptions was doomed to be still further shaken. Ella was asked if she had lately seen any of Mr. Such-an-one's caricatures.

"No,—I have not," she answered; "I have such a dislike to caricatures and caricaturers, (I mean of individual nature,) that I make it a scruple of conscience not to encourage so vile a practice by asking to see such productions."

"But you draw yourself, Miss Mordaunt?" eagerly asked the Colonel.

"Very little, indeed; I sketch trees and flowers from nature, and views when travelling; but the 'human face divine' is above my imitation."

"I agree with you," replied the Colonel, "in hatred to caricatures. I think it a very low order of humour, and a very high one of malignity; and I am apt to believe that there is a little warp in the mind that takes delight in them. I dislike lampoons of the pen as well as lampoons of the pencil, though not equally, as the former are chiefly directed against mental, and therefore perhaps corrigible imperfections; whereas the latter are always levelled at bodily imperfections, which are surely more objects of pity than of ridicule."

"But," replied Ella, "though less in the degree of malice, the lampoon is of the same quality as the caricature, and the mind that could write the one, if it could, would probably draw the other. For my part, I cordially dislike and discourage both, and so I do that species of mischief and fun, which is neither, but partakes of the malignant nature of each —I mean what is called *quizzing* or *playing on* persons in order to make them ridiculous. Indeed," said she, "I am very much of Sir Peter Teazle's opinion, that wit and good nature are more nearly allied than most persons are aware of."

It was impossible for Ella to mistake the animated look of approbation with which Colonel Vane regarded her, as she finished speaking and ventured to raise her eyes to his; but just as he was going to reply, a lady came across the room, and whispered something in her ear; on which Ella took her arm, and went to the opposite side, where she seated herself next to a little deformed, overdressed young woman, who seemed an object of particular attention to several young men and women who surrounded her. Soon after Ella gave this lady her arm, and walked up and down the room with her, and seemed listening to her with such courteous attention, that Colonel Vane supposed this extraordinary-looking being was either a person of high rank and consequence, or celebrated for some extraordinary mental endowments. At last, he ventured to ask who the lady was, leaning on Miss Mordaunt's arm.

"Oh! that is Miss Rawlins," replied one of the ladies.

"And who is Miss Rawlins?" asked the Colonel; "by the attention she excites, and even by the manner of Miss Mordaunt to her, I conclude she is a person of some consequence."

"No," was the reply; "it is because she is a person of *no* consequence *now*, poor thing! that Miss Mordaunt pays her such attention."

"You laid an emphasis on *now;* was she *ever* of consequence then?"

"O yes!—a rich heiress like Miss Mordaunt herself; and then even her unhappy person was forgotten, and her dress escaped ridicule, and she had as many partners as any one; but she lost all her money by the villany of an agent, and with it the respect formerly paid her; and it is only lately that she has recovered her spirits sufficiently to accompany the relation, on whom she is now dependent, to our balls as usual. But as, considering her person, she is foolishly fond of dress and dancing, the malicious, whom her riches kept in awe, presume on her poverty to make a joke of her; and there is one young man (by the by, it is the very young man who draws caricatures,) who asks her to dance in order to make her expose herself. And I overheard that young lady whisper Miss Mordaunt that

he was going to do it now. So, with her usual benevolence, she went to prevent this malevolent pleasure, by taking the poor little thing under her protection; and you see she has succeeded, and is bringing her hither."

At this moment Ella, her countenance beaming with gratified benignity, returned to the party; and being willing to give her protégée consequence by presenting her to a character so distinguished as Colonel Vane, she introduced them to each other; and the Colonel, emulous of Ella's liberality, paid Miss Rawlins distinguishing attention.

"Bless me, my dear child!" suddenly exclaimed Mrs. Anne Mordaunt, interrupting a pleasant conversation, "What did you do with my housewife? You did not give it to me again." Alarmed at the probable consequences of this interrogatory, if *followed up* closely, Ella could scarcely force herself to answer, "I—I left it in the card-room, I believe."

"Shall I fetch it?" cried the Colonel; "A housewife, did you say? pray, whereabouts did you leave it?"

"Oh! I dare say, my dear, you left it behind the screen," replied Mrs. Anne; "I saw you go behind it to sew the broken loops of your sandals; and as you were taken ill there, and went into the passage for air, you naturally enough forgot the thread-case I had lent to you."

"The screen! what screen!" cried Colonel Vane, a suspicion of the cause of Ella's distress shooting instantly across his mind; when, looking at Ella, her pale cheek and evident agitation confirmed all that he suspected; and equally shocked and embarrassed, but far more distressed than she was, he said, "I will go and seek for the thread-case," and left the room.

"Well, I protest, you are going to be ill again," cried the affectionate Mrs. Anne; but roused by this observation, Ella called up every feeling of virtuous pride and conscious innocence of intention at least, and prepared herself to meet Colonel Vane, when he returned, with such calmness as should prove that she felt it was for him to feel abashed in her presence from the discovery that she had heard his severe censures on her conduct; censures, which a very short acquaintance with her had evidently done much towards removing; and she remembered with great satisfaction, that he had desired to be presented to her before he had suspected that she had overheard him forswear acquaintance with her for ever.

Colonel Vane was sometime before he returned. As soon as he entered the card-room, and saw the screen, he conceived how Ella might be totally hidden from his view, and yet overhear all his conversation; and when he went behind the screen himself, and saw the housewife evidently thrown down in haste, for every thing belonging to it was scattered on the ground, he discovered, with a pang very like remorse, the evident perturbation and agony she must have endured, while, as he came in front of the screen, she had stolen out on the other side, and hastened into the passage. But why should Ella be thus affected? Had a coquette, then, so much real feeling, and such delicacy on the score of reputation? Was it wounded vanity alone, or a better feeling, that stole the colour from her cheek, and drowned her eyes in tears? Was his good opinion of more consequence to her than that of others? But it was remotely, and undefinedly, even to himself, that this idea flitted across his mind; for must not such a thought be the result of the most ill-founded and contemptible conceit? Yet why not attribute this sensibility to censure, to the virtuous horror natural to a young and innocent mind, in learning, perhaps for the first time, that the thoughtless gaiety and artless warmth of her manner had exposed her to imputations at which her soul revolted? And had he not that evening witnessed proofs of the rectitude of her feelings, and the benevolence of her sentiments, which tallied with this construction on her conduct? This, too, would account for the cold, dignified civility of her manner. Wounded vanity would have showed itself in haughty pique and petulant rudeness; culpable indifference to blame would have exhibited itself in increased gaiety, and an increased inattention to the common restraints of society; but wounded sensibility, and offended delicacy, and conscious innocence unjustly accused, would have acted, he could not deny it to himself, exactly as Ella did; and with feelings difficult to describe, he took up Mrs. Anne Mordaunt's housewife and its furniture, and returned into the ball-room. He presented them to her in silence, and without daring to look towards Ella, who remained silent also, but soon entered, with seeming composure, into a conversation with the gentleman next her. It was near the hour for the company to assemble at the tea-tables; but Mrs. Anne thinking Ella had better return home, as she complained of a headache, one of the gentlemen was sent to call their carriage; and, having got it up immediately, he presented his arm to Mrs. Anne Mordaunt, while the Colonel offered his to Ella; but taking that of the gentleman next her, she smiled and said, "Excuse me, Colonel, if I prefer the support of an old friend to that of a *stranger*;" and she spoke the word in such a manner, as to make the Colonel suspect that she meant, by "*stranger*," to say "enemy." And, mortified and conscience-stricken, he sighed deeply, and followed them in silence to the carriage; nor did he leave the door till they drove off; when to his very respectful bow Ella replied by a kiss of her hand, and her cousin by several gracious inclinations of her head.

"Oh! what a dear, charming, beautiful man that is!" cried Mrs. Anne, as soon as they drove off; "I hope, my dear, you have invited him to Bower Wood?"

"No, indeed, madam," replied Ella, "nor shall I invite him."

"Not invite him! Why, you amaze me. Pray tell me—" Here Ella, not choosing to explain herself at that moment, interrupted her by begging her to let down one of the glasses, because she was very faint; then throwing herself back in the carriage, she sighed in a manner so unusual for her, that her affectionate relation was alarmed, and asked her if she was unhappy. "No, not unhappy *now*, only agitated," she replied, "but I will tell you more to-morrow." Then falling into a reverie, she spoke no more till the carriage arrived at Bower Wood; where, hastily wishing Mrs. Anne good night, she retired to her own apartment.

In two days' time Captain Clinton returned, having left his father out of danger; and he heard, with no small degree of triumph, that Colonel Vane had desired to be presented to Miss Mordaunt, and had conquered most of his prepossessions against her. But he knew the human heart too well to express all that he felt, or all that he foresaw. He knew that Colonel Vane would naturally enough be inclined, if left to himself, to admire Ella even more than justice warranted, to reconcile his own heart to the injustice he had done her in not liking her enough at first; but he also knew that pride, and an aversion to own himself in the wrong, would probably retard the progress of his admiration, if he seemed eager to urge it on; he therefore did not appear to derive any triumph over his friend from this change of opinion, though he could not help owning to him his suspicions that Ella had overheard their conversation.

"I am *sure* she did," replied Colonel Vane.

"What makes you think so?" asked Captain Clinton.

"I wish to be excused telling you," replied the Colonel, too delicate to disclose even to Ella's friend, the emotions he had witnessed; and Captain Clinton, who wished nothing more ardently than a union betwixt Ella and Vane, and who knew how likely this discovery of the Colonel's would be to interest him in her favour, if he was left to the operations of his own mind, pursued the discourse no further, but went to pay a visit to Ella herself. He found *her* more communicative than Colonel Vane, for she told him what she had overheard,—she described all that had passed after he left her, and her conviction that Colonel Vane was certain that she had overheard all that had passed.

"But I hope you believe," cried Clinton, "that he has altered his opinion of you?"

"I conclude that he has, or he would not have desired to be presented to me; but if his ideas of propriety are so very rigid, I shall forfeit his good opinion again very soon;—though, spite of my better judgment, I am almost ashamed to own that I felt myself *influenced* by his presence into a change of manner."

"Ay indeed! how so?"

"When my old playfellow, young Danvers, came up to speak to me after an absence of some months, I actually drew back my hand as I bade him welcome, because forsooth your fastidious friend had censured the readiness with which I suffered my hand to be pressed! But ashamed of my condescension to the humours of this strange man, I held it out to him when he left me to join the dance, resolved that Colonel Vane should like me on my own terms, or dislike me as he chose; for that, if I was conscious of no improper feeling while giving my hand to the friends who accosted me, there was no harm in so doing."

"No—not in your own eyes, nor in that of your friends; but great harm in the eyes of a jealous man and a lover."

"But Colonel Vane is not my lover."

"I am not so sure of that," he replied; and Ella started from her seat with an exclamation which certainly partook as much of joy as surprise.

"At least, I will venture to say that he is very likely to *become* your lover; and therefore you are to consider whether he is a prize so well worth having, as to make it worth your while to reform your manners in order to secure him."

"Reform my manners, sir? and do *you too* distrust and condemn me?"

"Oh no!—I am only *your friend*; nor, as I am neither jealous nor suspicious, would your manner disturb me, even if I were your lover. I think it the most fascinating and delightful manner possible; but it is a most dangerous and a most misleading one. Your manner to me, for instance, if I were not an engaged man, would lead me to suppose I was a very great favourite with you, and that my addresses would be favourably received."

"Absurd!" replied Ella, "when I venture to let you see by my manners how much I like you because you *are* an engaged man, and therefore cannot suppose I *mean* any thing more than the kindness of friendship. It is for this reason that I am so fond of the notice and society of married men; for it is hateful to have one's motives misconstrued, and to have it thought, if one is civil to a man, that one is angling for offers."

"Yes—and therefore you make all the wives of your acquaintance jealous, and arm their tongues with a thousand slanders to let off against your reputation and innocence."

"Well, Captain Clinton, I can only say," replied Ella, rather piqued at his sincerity, "I can only say, that if my manners and habits be ever so wrong, they *are* my habits and

manners,—they are *part* of me, and I cannot be hypocrite enough to change or disguise them."

"Not without you have an adequate motive."

"And what would be one?"

"The wish of making yours a heart that is worthy of you. I know you admire Colonel Vane, and I believe you might love him."

"May be so; but must I therefore adopt all his whims, or rather act a part in order to captivate him?"

"I think that you must either give up all idea of him, or act conformably to his ideas of right. He is a man of a jealous and distrustful nature; but it is his only fault. If you were living with a nervous person, whom the shutting of a door hard would throw into a fit, you would either quit that person, or take care to shut the door gently; so, if you were to love a jealous man, you must either learn to abstain from what might give him umbrage, or conquer your attachment."

"I should conquer my attachment!" exclaimed Ella indignantly; "but I have as yet no attachment to conquer, nor *will* I have; for I could never be happy with a man who was liable to mistake the gaiety of innocence for constitutional levity, and the freedom resulting from an affectionate heart, for the forwardness of a depraved one."

"Well; time will show whether you can keep this resolution, and in the meanwhile my friend must make his own way with you."

"I assure you, sir," said Ella gravely, "he shall never come *hither*, an invited guest of *mine*—*he* shall not have the opportunity of suspecting that the '*arrant coquette*' has a design on his heart;—whenever we meet, as I like his conversation, and honour his character, I will not avoid him; but never, never shall he have it in his power to say that Ella Mordaunt condescended to court the acquaintance and attention of a man to whom she was an object of censure and suspicion."

"I commend your spirit," replied Captain Clinton; "and should Colonel Vane express his wonder at not being your invited guest, I will tell him the reason."

"By all means," replied Ella; and Captain Clinton took his leave, rejoiced at her determination, and resolved to impart it immediately to his friend, as he well knew it would exalt her in his estimation, and make a man of his nature still more eager to obtain that favour which the indignant pride of an offended woman was eager to withhold from him.

He was not wrong in his conjectures.—Though sorry and mortified, Colonel Vane commended the determination of Ella, acquiesced in its propriety, and did not resent it by his conduct;—on the contrary, he paid her the most respectful attention whenever they met, and Ella at length discovered that it was not so easy to retain her determination not to love 'a jealous and distrustful man.'

But what became of the election? The old members were returned, much to the mortification of busy Mr. Linwood, who could not succeed in stirring up an opposition, and who, owing Colonel Vane a grudge for not consenting to stand, took his revenge by telling every one he was making love to the heiress, who would jilt him as she had done every one else. To be brief; Colonel Vane's leave of absence had nearly expired, and he was about to leave W——, when Ella was prevailed upon to give a small select ball to celebrate Mrs. Anne Mordaunt's birthday.

"To be sure," said Captain Clinton, "as Vane is going away, you will break through your resolution, and invite him."

"No—his approaching departure is a reason why I should *not* invite him—for let me continue the effort but a *little* longer, and my trial will be over."

"Oh! then you own it *is* an effort?"

"Yes,—and a great one too, but I will persevere to the end." And Captain Clinton was resolved she should have the merit of persevering, and yet that his friend should be at the ball; for he wished him to see Ella to the greatest advantage, namely, at her own house. He wished him also to see the simplicity yet magnificence with which her own exquisite taste had ornamented the apartments;—in short, he had set his mind on Colonel Vane's being once at least the guest of Ella; and after talking the whole matter over tête-à-tête with Mrs. Anne, who was the queen of the feast, she gave him leave to invite Colonel Vane, and promised to take all the responsibility on herself. But as Captain Clinton knew the Colonel would not go on Mrs. Anne's invitation only, he took care how he worded it, and accosted him with,—"So, Vane, at last the embargo is taken off, and you are invited to the ball at Bower Wood?"

"Indeed!" replied the Colonel, more gratified than he chose to own even to himself,—"Indeed! and would you advise me to accept the invitation?"

"To be sure. I know you are going out of town till the day arrives—but you will be here time enough for that."

"Certainly I shall,—but where is the card? I must answer it."

"There is no card—Miss Mordaunt has issued no cards, (which was indeed the truth,) and a verbal answer by me will be sufficient."

"Very well," said Colonel Vane; "then tell Miss Mordaunt I will have the honour to wait on her. But," added he after a pause, "she ought not to have invited me. If she was right in the first instance, she was wrong in the last, and I should have respected her more had she remained firm in her resolution."

"You are the most ungrateful, romantic, ridiculous being I ever knew," replied the se-

cretly pleased Clinton, who knew that Ella had acted as the Colonel thought she ought to have done; "Why, man! you will always refine away your own happiness, and utterly destroy that of your wife, if you ever have one."

"My wife's notions," replied he, "must be as refined as my own, or she would never *be* my wife."

That day Colonel Vane left W——, and did not return till it was time to dress for the ball at Bower Wood; therefore he had no opportunity of seeing Ella, and finding out the deceit which had been put on him.

Ella, meanwhile, had been preparing for her entertainment; and when every thing was completed, and the gratified Mrs. Anne Mordaunt had surveyed all the new decorations of the apartments, and beheld the taste with which the old ones had been arrayed, she declared that Ella had exceeded even herself. But the mistress of the elegant mansion, the directress of the splendid feast, moved through the brilliant suite of rooms pensive, anxious, and absent;—for the eye that she most wished to please would not behold the charm which she had laboured to spread around, the lips whose praises she most coveted would not breathe in her ear the accents of admiration.

She was indulging these tender thoughts, for tender they certainly were, and, retiring into an inner room from the crowd which was just beginning to assemble, was replacing the head of a rare and newly-purchased plant which had escaped from the lath which supported it, when turning round she beheld the object of her reverie beside her! while almost with a scream of astonishment she exclaimed, in return to his smile of pleasure and his respectful bow, "Colonel Vane, is it possible, sir, that I see *you* here!"

Equally surprised in his turn, Colonel Vane replied, "Did not Captain Clinton deliver my answer to you, madam, and tell you I would have the honour to wait on you?"

"No—indeed he did not," said Ella, with an arch smile, not a little pleased to find that without any infringement of her dignity Colonel Vane was her guest; and dismissing entirely from her mind the idea which at first disturbed her, a suspicion wholly unworthy of Colonel Vane's character, that he had presumed to come uninvited, she attributed his appearance at her ball to the injudicious though well-meant deception of Captain Clinton and Mrs. Anne Mordaunt.

But though Ella's countenance, which had worn an expression of even haughty surprise when she first saw Colonel Vane, now wore one of archness and pleasantry, Colonel Vane was by no means satisfied with either the one expression or the other. It was evident she did not expect him, or that she was acting a part: the question was, whether she had invited him, or *had not?*—"But I will not remain any longer in this suspense," said he to himself, "and I will tell her that if she wishes me to go, I will go directly."

Just as he had made this resolution, Ella, whom politeness forbade to let Colonel Vane know he was there without invitation, said to him, "As this is the first time I have had the honour of seeing you at my house, sir, I hope you will allow me to show you what it contains of value; in this room are some very fine pictures."

"In seeing you, Miss Mordaunt, I see," replied the Colonel, "what is most valuable and most precious here."

"*Indeed!*" said Ella, archly smiling, "*brilliant* perhaps, but not *precious*, surely, in *your* estimation?"

"Spare me, Miss Mordaunt, spare me the mortification of recollecting the moment now long past, and always repented of, when I was *unjust*, and *you calumniated*." Ella bowed, and turned away her head; for she was conscious that her eyes were filled with tears, but tears of pleasure and of tenderness.—"Allow me to add," resumed the Colonel, "that I can look at nothing here with satisfaction, not even at *you*, till I am assured that I am a welcome and a bidden guest."

"I would not," she replied, "have told you a perhaps unpleasant truth; but, when thus interrogated, I will not be so mean as to tell you a falsehood. You are a *welcome*, but not a *bidden* guest. I *did* not, *would* not, *could* not, invite you to my house, you *know* I could not, till some acknowledgment on your part, that you had hastily and erroneously judged me, had appeased my offended delicacy. But *now* you have said all that was necessary—you have owned that you were unjust—and I will remember of the past, only those judicious hints for my conduct which it afforded me, and which may serve in some points to direct the future."

"Miss Mordaunt—madam—you confound me by your goodness," he replied; and so wayward are the fancies of a jealous man, he *feared*, he *thought* that she was now giving him too much encouragement. "But, madam, you must allow me to inquire who has presumed thus to impose both on you and me."

"Oh! I *know* no more on that subject than *you* do—but I suspect it was a lady, and the queen of the evening, Mrs. Anne Mordaunt, who candidly told me, she should not think her entertainment complete, unless it was graced by your presence."

"But Captain Clinton brought me the invitation."

"Very likely, deceived himself by Mrs. Anne; or if he were in the plot, surely you will not be very angry?"

"One man, madam," replied Colonel Vane gravely, "ought to be careful how he presumes to jest with another."

"Colonel Vane!" cried Ella, turning pale with alarm, and laying her hand involuntarily on his arm while she fixed her eyes earnestly on his face. He understood and felt the *force* of the appeal; and gently pressing the hand whose unconscious grasp was not lost on him, he told her, that though he must reprove, he would not resent Captain Clinton's subterfuge, if he were really to blame. And soon after, as Mrs. Anne took nearly the whole blame on herself, Colonel Vane thanked both him and her for having betrayed him into a very charming evening, and Ella retired to rest happier than she had been for many a day; for Colonel Vane had appeared a lover in all but the name, and she flattered herself that before he left W—— he would make her a declaration in form. What was now become of her resolution, never to marry a jealous and distrustful man! Alas! it was forgotten; or this one fault was lost in the blaze of numberless real or imagined virtues. But she knew not yet the character of Colonel Vane, nor the caution that influences every action and every resolve of a man of his disposition.

Colonel Vane did love Ella, passionately love her—but though he had the firmest faith in her innocence and her principles, her manners were not such as he should wish for in his wife. It was a *manner* to invite attention and even affection from every one, because it seemed to promise both; and whether the impelling motive was benevolence or coquetry, it exposed a woman to the danger of solicitations; a danger to which even virtue itself should shrink from being exposed—for craving and gratified vanity has undone, as he justly thought, more women in a year, than originally vicious inclinations in ten; and if he were called abroad in the service of his country, as he would probably be, how could he, without anxiety, wearying and incessant, leave a wife alone and unprotected, and to her own guidance, whose beauty could not fail to attract admirers, and whose manners were such as to give those lovers encouragement?

So reasoned and so felt Colonel Vane, though he loved with ardour,—or rather *because* he loved with ardour; and he resolved to leave W—— without making any avowal of his love and trying to obtain a confession of hers in return, wishing to try what effect some weeks of absence would have on his attachment, and on the preference which Ella felt for him; and wisely considering that, unless their mutual regard could stand that test, he did not love *her* sufficiently to overlook her faults, nor she *him* sufficiently to bear with his sense of them. As he was now an allowed visiter at Bower Wood, he went thither to bid her farewell, having studied what he would say when he arose to depart, something tender enough to prove how much he admired her, yet not sufficiently explicit to commit himself; while Ella on her side, *if* Colonel Vane did *not* make a declaration of his sentiments, had settled what sort of leave she would take of *him*—it was to be one so fully worded, and so calmly delivered, that he should not suspect how much she was disappointed, and how deeply she regretted his departure. He came to Bower Wood accordingly the day before he was to set off; and Ella, as much on her guard as he was, received him with composure, though, as her cousin was absent, she received him tête-à-tête. But while he sat there, gazing with ever-increasing admiration on that face which he should soon behold no more, the idea of his approaching separation from Ella so much unmanned him that he felt, if he trusted himself longer in her presence, he should betray his heart entirely to her. He therefore suddenly arose and took her hand, meaning to say what he intended, and to express the usual parting wishes; but overcome by emotion, neither he nor Ella spoke a single word,—but he bowed upon her hand in silence, and then, not even looking at her, rushed out of the room.

Ella sat for some time after he left her, absorbed in a reverie, at once painful and pleasant. True, he had not made the long desired and long expected proposal, but he had quitted her in such evident emotion and such expressive silence as love alone could have occasioned; and she could not help hoping that he might write the feelings and wishes which he did not speak. But then the thought that day after day would pass, week after week, month after month perhaps, without her eye beholding, her ear hearing, or her mind holding sweet communion with his, filled her with almost intolerable agony; and to remain on that spot where she had seen and conversed with him, but could see and converse with him no longer, seemed such an increase of her suffering, that she very gladly took advantage of an excuse to hasten into Devonshire, though the cause of her journey gave her considerable pain; for it was no other than the illness of her relation Mrs. Anne Mordaunt, who was ordered for a threatening inflammation on the lungs into the mild climate of Sidmouth. Thither, therefore, she bore her drooping charge; but bore in vain; the power of medicine, of salubrious air, and of the most unremitting attention, failed to save this harmless and unoffending being from the disease that impended over her; and before they had been resident six weeks in the West, Ella was fated to follow a second adopted parent to her last home.

The occupation of watching by the bed of sickness, painful as it was, served to divert Ella's mind from the anxieties of an every day increasing and perhaps hopeless passion; and when the necessity of these attentions was over, Ella felt herself again thrown on the world an unprotected orphan, and also restored to all the painful consciousness which had

hitherto been suspended.—She was again obliged to look round for a companion, and felt added regret for the little prospect she now had of obtaining, what in her orphan state was so particularly desirable, the protection of a husband. While her plans continued unfixed, she received an invitation to stay at the house of a married friend in London, and thither she immediately repaired, glad of any change and any scene which would take her from herself, and weaken the power of certain images and recollections in her mind.

Colonel Vane meanwhile, who found that in leaving W—— he had not left his attachment behind him, but that he

"Dragged at each remove a lengthening chain,"

was eager to learn of Captain Clinton all possible intelligence of Ella and her movements, and therefore kept up a regular correspondence with him. He was consequently informed of the death of Mrs. Anne Mordaunt, and of Ella's visit to London. "She is again, then," thought Colonel Vane, "alone and unprotected. O that I could at once resolve to offer her the protection of a husband! But as other men may do that only too soon, I will, as soon as duty allows me, go to London and see how she is situated;"—and as much impelled by jealousy as by love, Colonel Vane set off for the metropolis.

Ella had now been two months in London; and though she was conscious of a deeply-rooted attachment, she was not unhappy, for the excellence of her temper led her to be and appear pleased with the efforts made to amuse her; and she could not but be gratified with the attentions paid her by the gentlemen who visited at the house of her friends, amongst whom were men whose situation in life was such as to authorize them to aspire to her hand. But the encouraging smiles, the condescending familiarity, which before she became exclusively attached to one man had distinguished her conduct to all, were now wholly withheld; and though the eye of Colonel Vane no longer beheld her, her manner was such as would have gratified even his jealous feeling and rigid ideas of propriety, *if* a being under the influence of jealousy be capable of ever seeing things as they really are. Besides, the recent loss of an unoffending and affectionate relation, the consciousness of her being a lone and insulated being, and the conviction that wealth and independence are empty possessions if they are unaccompanied with the ties of family love, and the pleasures of domestic intercourse, damped that gaiety which used to carry her into excess of liveliness, and threw a pensive shade over her countenance, which, without diminishing its beauty, increased its interest.

The first night of Colonel Vane's arrival in London, he went to the theatre, intending to present himself the next day, authorized by a letter from Captain Clinton, at the house of Ella's friends. It so happened, that Ella and her friends, attended by gentlemen who had dined with them, went to the same theatre, and sat in a box opposite to the one which the Colonel had entered. — What a welcome opportunity to a man of his disposition!—He could watch unseen the conduct of the woman he loved, when surrounded by other men, and when unconscious of his restraining presence! He *did* watch her, observing, as he did so, the paleness of her cheek, and the thinness of her person, occasioned, he hoped, by anxious attendance on her relation, and also, (but this he scarcely dared whisper to himself) by some anxiety of a more tender nature. — Nor was she in her usual spirits. — In short, he really saw her as I have described her above; and with all his propensity to turn and twist her manner and conduct into what he disapproved, he was forced at length to allow his heart to be gladdened by the conviction that her conduct that evening, though she was surrounded by men who evidently admired, and sought every means of engaging her attention, and paying her what the French call *les petits soins*, was exactly such as he should wish to be that of his wife; and now, from the bottom of his soul, he wished that wife to be Ella Mordaunt.

Full of these proper wishes and just resolves, he was preparing,—though not without trepidation, and all hope of being beloved having vanished from his mind,—for well does the bard say, "The lover is a man afraid,"—he was preparing to go to the box and pay his compliments to Ella, when a brother officer came hastily up to him, and begged him to go out with him instantly.—He did so; and had the mortification to learn, that if he wished to prevent a duel between two hot-headed young men of his acquaintance, he must follow him instantly to the Bedford Arms. He did so; and was detained there till it was too late to return to the theatre.

The next day, however, he resolved to make himself amends, and call on Ella; and if he found her alone, and that she received him in a way that should encourage his hopes of her liking him in secret, he thought, yes, he was *sure* that he should declare his passion.—Accordingly, he set off for Montagu Place; — but he had the mortification of learning there that Miss Mordaunt, attended only by her servants, had set off for Wales, being summoned thither by the illness of a friend.—"How unfortunate!" thought Colonel Vane; "but I can inquire which road she took, and *follow* her.—Yet, no—then I should commit myself—for what right could I have to follow her, unless I went on purpose to make her an offer of marriage?" And sad, disappointed, but still too cautious and undecided to end his anxieties

at once, he returned to his hotel, and Ella pursued her journey uninterrupted.

The two months that ensued were months of great anxiety to Colonel Vane, for Ella did not write even to her friend, the betrothed wife of Captain Clinton; and all that was known of her was, that she was in Wales—but that her servants were returned to Bower Wood;—and all they could tell of their mistress was that her return was uncertain.—However, just as Colonel Vane's own regiment had been ordered to W——, and had marched in, Ella returned to Bower Wood and alone, but was almost immediately joined there by friends from London. Colonel Vane was not slow to pay his compliments to Ella on her arrival; and if embarrassment of manner, and emotion too strong to be concealed, were requisite to convince him he might offer without fear of being refused, Ella's appearance when she first saw Colonel Vane was sufficient to lay every tender apprehension to rest, and encourage him to hope for all that he desired. But this embarrassment and this emotion did not seem to originate *merely* in the conscious feelings of a susceptible and attached woman; her cheek kept varying from red to pale, from pale to red, and her manner changing from kindness to coldness, and from openness to sudden reserve, during the whole time that he remained at Bower Wood. However, when he took leave she cordially bade him consider himself as a welcome guest at her house, and fixed a day for his dining there.—"Strange, uncertain, variable, but fascinating creature!" thought Colonel Vane as he left the house.—"How unaccountable was her manner!—A painful, not a *pleasing* consciousness seemed to oppress her during my visit; and she looked as if something weighed heavily on her mind.—What has she been so long about in Wales? I wish I knew."

I shall pass over the few succeeding weeks, and content myself with saying, that every day decreased Colonel Vane's distrust of Ella's capability to make him happy as a wife, and increased his admiration of her charms and her virtues;—but he had not made up his mind to disclose the state of his heart to her, when Ella's friends proposed a voyage down the Wye, and Colonel Vane was asked to join the party. To a proposal so likely to make him still more acquainted with the character of Ella he joyfully acceded; and as there was no other single man of the party, Ella, without any design of his or hers, was left to his care; and she could without impropriety hang on his arm, and walk alone with him on the beautiful banks of the river, and along its wooded rocks, though such familiarity and distinction would in the streets of W—— have been wisely judged indecorous.—And while his heart was still more softened, still more attached by the endearing familiarity thus endured, and by the beauty of the surrounding scenery, Colonel Vane forgot he had ever hesitated, and was only withheld by the emotion and timidity of a lover from avowing his passion; when an accident threw him off his guard, and made an immediate avowal an act of duty and honour. As Ella and Colonel Vane reached the boat on their return from viewing the ruins of Goodrich Castle, before the rest of the company, "Perhaps," said Ella, "our friends are seeking us; you had better try to find them, while I sit in the boat."—So saying, without waiting for assistance she attempted to enter it; but instead of putting her foot in, she put it against the boat, and by the suddenness with which it moved away she was precipitated head foremost into the river, and so near the boat, that her danger, but for immediate succour, would have been great. But Colonel Vane jumped in after her, and in a minute more she was safe on land, and much less alarmed than Colonel Vane himself.—Indeed his agitation resembled frenzy—he clasped her almost convulsively to his bosom, exclaiming, "dreadful! to see the water close once more over all that I most love on earth! But she is safe, I have rescued *her*." Then bursting into tears, he hid his face in his hands, regardless who witnessed the expressions of his tenderness and his emotion; while the sad scene of his father's death again lived in his remembrance. By this time the rest of the party arrived, and were full of consternation at seeing Ella and Colonel Vane's wet and miserable condition—and not a little agitated when they learned the cause.—But to obtain a change of clothes where they were, seemed difficult if not impossible; and as Ella professed that she felt no alarm lest she should take cold, they all entered the boat, and desired the boatmen to row as fast as they could to Monmouth. But not fast enough could they row for the alarmed feelings of Colonel Vane, whose apprehensions lest Ella should suffer from sitting so long in her wet garments took such entire possession of his mind, that his usual self-command forsook him, and he could scarcely preserve his temper when his companions allowed their own attention to be called off from Ella by the still increasing beauty of the rocks on either side of them; nay, he could scarcely refrain from quarrelling with Ella herself, when she endeavoured, though vainly, to prevail on them all to stop and walk up, as is the custom, the very high, grand, and wooded rock called Symon's Yatt—urging the necessity of no time being lost if she wished to escape perhaps destruction.—But Ella had no fear, no painful feelings whatever, and perhaps the happy though fluttered state of her spirits might preserve her from the illness Colonel Vane dreaded for her; for she now saw love triumphant over every other consciousness in the man whom she preferred to every other; and she also saw, that after this public dis-

play of his tenderness, he was bound by every honourable principle to make a direct avowal of his wishes and intentions. Her friends and companions felt the same necessity; and being convinced that opportunity alone was now wanting for that purpose,—as soon as Ella and Colonel Vane had made a thorough change of raiment at Monmouth, and there was an excuse for leaving them together, the whole party contrived, for different reasons, to leave the room, and Colonel Vane no longer deferred the long meditated and long wished declaration.

But Ella's answer was not exactly all his heart demanded, though it was what his judgment *approved*. She frankly told him, that though her feelings were decidedly in his favour, her reason was not—because she knew that *his* reason had once most decidedly disapproved her manners, and she was fearful that the time might come when he might feel a return of his old prejudices, and wish he had not formed so hasty a connexion. She therefore insisted that they should both remain unfettered by any engagement for six months to come, in order that, if either of them should in that time see cause to break off the connexion entirely, he or she might be at liberty to do so with perfect honour and propriety;—and to this condition Colonel Vane reluctantly assented. In the meanwhile, Ella was to admit his visits as an approved though not entirely an accepted lover; and with judgments satisfied, but both with hearts discontented though relieved, they walked out in search of their friends, who saw on Ella's countenance an expression of cheerfulness to which it had been long a stranger, and were not slow to discover the cause of it. Time now flew on rapid wings both to Ella and Colonel Vane; for, as she had always a proper chaperone staying with her, she was able to admit his frequent visits. But in the midst of their happy prospects, and when confidence had replaced distrust in the mind of Colonel Vane, temptations to a relapse were thrown in his way, which, though his reason rejected, his feelings were unable entirely to resist.

He one day received an anonymous letter, which was as follows:

"Awake from your dream of confidence and bliss! Awake, Colonel Vane, at the voice of a sincere friend, and ponder over the following facts.

"Miss M—— went suddenly into Wales—the pretence to visit a dying friend, a relation. On entering the principality, she dismissed her servants,—and she returned in two months, time, pale, thin, and dispirited. Ever since, and even up to this very day, she has been in the habit of rising before six o'clock, and walking to a cottage two miles from Bower Wood, where she nurses and sometimes weeps over a beautiful infant with large *blue eyes* and long dark eye-lashes. You and I have seen such eyes before. Is such a woman worthy to be your wife? No, Colonel V——. Slight not this necessary warning. Awake, *inquire*, and act accordingly.

"A Friend to the Brave."

"Vile scrawl! infamous calumny!" cried Colonel Vane in the first moments of receiving it,—and wiser in these moments than in the subsequent ones;—for in spite of that indignant disregard which every just, rational, and honourable being ought to feel at anonymous slander, anonymous accusation,—every time he read the letter, and he read it often, he questioned more and more the possibility of any one's daring to make such charges if wholly unfounded; and his reflections ended in a firm resolve to endeavour to ascertain first, whether it was true that her servants had been dismissed; and secondly, if she really rose early and walked before breakfast. Though he had not, he *believed*, the remotest idea that if there was a child at the cottage, that child was Ella's,—yet was it not mean to act on information which might only be the result of malignity? Was it not a justice he owed Ella Mordaunt, to burn the letter and forget its unworthy contents? So reason, justice, and knowledge of the world advised; but the disposition of Colonel Vane was such as to render him incapable of listening wholly to these suggestions, and he resolved to proceed accordingly. But as soon as he saw Ella, and beheld the frank, ingenuous expression of pleasure which beamed in her eyes, and mantled on her cheek, when she welcomed him that evening to Bower Wood; he, even he, forgot all his suspicions, and gave himself up once more to the joy of loving and being beloved. The next day, however, as he stood admiring the prospect at the door of Bower Wood, after alighting from his horse, Ella's old butler accosted him with "A fine prospect, sir." "Yes," replied Colonel Vane, "it is;" and then, (for the opportunity was irresistible) he added, "but you saw much finer in Wales, Jermyn, when you attended your mistress thither."

"No, indeed, sir," replied Jermyn; "for we did not go far with my mistress—she sent us home and went on alone."

At this confirmation of the truth of one part of the anonymous letter Colonel Vane absolutely started, and entered the house in some perturbation of mind. Ella soon saw that something had disturbed him; but as she could not suspect the cause, she only thought it was a cloud that would soon blow over again. After other conversation he contrived to turn the conversation on Wales and its beauties; and glancing his eye on Ella, he observed her turn pale, and then red, in evident confusion.

"I think," said he, "you were two months in Wales?"

"Yes."

"In what part?"

"Oh, quite amongst the mountains—in a very sequestered spot."

"But you walked and rode out to see prospects, I conclude?"

"No, very little—for I was chiefly confined to a sick bed, and—." Here Ella's voice faltered, and with tears in her eyes she left the room.

"What could excite this evident emotion?" thought Colonel Vane; "Why that conscious and alarmed look when I mentioned Wales? Why that cheek pale and red by turns?" And when Colonel Vane took leave of Ella that night, he was conscious of a degree of coldness in his manner, which he regretted, but could not alter.

But what did he suspect? Not that Ella had gone into Wales, as the letter hinted, to be confined, and had brought her infant to be nursed in her neighbourhood. *No*, he was *sure* he did not suspect *that*; and he *certainly* would not go to the cottage to see if there was a child there with eyes and eyelashes like Ella's; but he would, as he before resolved, discover whether she walked out alone early in the morning. He was, however, spared this inquiry; for a gentleman said to Ella in his presence,

"Surely, Miss Mordaunt, I have seen you twice this week on the road to D——, walking alone, at six o'clock in the morning?"

"Me! O,—yes—that is,—O,—yes, very likely," replied Ella, pale, agitated, and very evidently shrinking from the inquiring eyes of Colonel Vane, which were fixed upon her.

"I thought it must be you by the form and air," continued the gentleman; "and though I was going pheasant shooting, I would have stopped to have paid my compliments to you, but you vanished both times suddenly; and I thought I saw you go into a cottage in a field."

"I *did* go into a cottage in a field," replied Ella gravely, and in a voice nearly extinct with emotion; then turning to the person next her, she changed the conversation; and not long after, Colonel Vane, on pretence of wanting a ride for the good of his health, rang for his horse, and springing on it, set it into a full gallop, as if hoping to escape by speed from the necessity and the agony of thought. But he must at length terminate his gallop; and he must at last allow himself leisure for thought. What was this mystery concerning the cottage? and ought Ella, in their present relative situation, to have any concealments from him, or to be involved in any mystery?—He thought, and wisely thought, *not*,—for it was impossible for him to conceive of any circumstance sufficient to account for conduct at once detrimental to his peace and her own reputation. He returned, however, to Bower Wood to dinner; and when Ella, with the looks and accents of unsuspicious love, tenderly hoped he was better, and that the ride and the air had recovered him entirely, he tried, and for a while succeeded, to banish all unpleasant ideas from his mind, and to believe her not only free from guilt, but in this instance free from error also. These happy feelings, however, were not doomed to last long. He found lying on his table a second letter, in the same hand-writing as the first; he opened it with a trembling hand, and found that it contained these words:

"Blind and incredulous man! I see that you still hesitate to believe my friendly information. Go then to the cottage at six o'clock any morning, and let your *own eyes* convince you of my truth. Why should an innocent woman have a child under her care without your privity, and unknown even to her own servants? Think of *that*, Master Ford."

By this quotation it should seem that the writer was acquainted with the jealous and suspicious nature of Colonel Vane; for Ford himself was not more apt to feelings of that nature, and never was there man on whom anonymous letters, the vilest agents of the vilest beings, were more likely to exert a most pernicious influence. "Yes, I will go," said Colonel Vane to himself. "I will see and judge for myself."—But a second and a third morning came, and still he went not, for, if he was deceived, the delusion was so dear, that he could almost have exclaimed, "And if I'm cheated, cheat me still!"

But a third letter came to whet his almost blunted purpose,—blunted latterly by this consideration,—"If she has a secret, what right have I to inquire into it against her will?" However, on the receipt of this *third* letter, he argued thus,—"What right has she, under our present circumstances, to have a secret of so suspicious a nature concealed from me?"

The letter was as follows:

"I have done with you—you are a *dupe*, and *deserve* to be one, and no one will pity you; for 'forewarned, forearmed,' says the proverb—but you despise warnings, and I must leave you to your fate."

The next morning after the receipt of this, Colonel Vane rose before six, and soon after that hour he was on the road to D——, while before him, at some distance, he saw a lady, who he was sure was Ella herself. Soon after he saw her with rapid step turn into a field, and, looking back as if fearful of being observed, he beheld her enter a cottage. So far was consistent with the statement in the letter. The next fact to be ascertained was, what the cottage contained, and fearful of discovering, yet resolved to discover, the truth, he walked hastily on, though forced to stop and take breath as he proceeded, emotion almost depriving him of his usual powers, till at length he reached that spot, pregnant with the happiness or misery of his future life. The door was open; and casting a hasty glance forward, he saw Ella sitting with her back to the door, holding an infant in her lap, over which she seemed to be weeping

while she caressed it, and as he gazed in breathless agitation he heard her say, "Poor unconscious child! poor Ella! thou didst cost thy mother dear indeed!" A deep sigh, and an exclamation of "Gracious Heaven!" which involuntarily escaped Colonel Vane, caused her to turn round; and starting from her seat, while she clasped the infant to her bosom, she stood looking on him in speechless silence, and with a lip pale and quivering as his own; at length she recollected herself sufficiently to ask what brought him thither at that early hour? mingling with her words an air of proud defiance, from the consciousness that he came probably as a spy upon her actions.

"*These* brought me hither," replied Colonel Vane, piqued at her manner and expression, and putting into her trembling hand the anonymous letters, darting at her at the same moment a look of indignant inquiry.

Ella hastily perused the base, calumnious pages. "So, sir," she answered, returning them with seeming calmness of manner, though her whole frame shook with indignant agony, and her lips were parched with agitation, while her air was one of haughty disdain—"So, sir, you came hither on the information of an anonymous correspondent!"

"Yes, madam, but a well-informed one, it seems; for I have found all that these letters contain true."

"Indeed!" she exclaimed with almost wild emotion, for she remembered that the letter-writer insinuated that she was the mother of the child whom she held in her arms. Colonel Vane answered not to the exclamation, but to the expression of her countenance, when he replied, "Yes, madam, yes, and I demand of you whose is that infant whom you are pressing to your bosom? Tell me, I conjure you, tell me."

"Never, never, sir," she returned, surveying him with a look of scorn unutterable. "But you *forget*, sir," she added with a sneer, "your anonymous friend has informed you whose child it is."

"Ella, dearest Ella," cried Colonel Vane, "for I do love you, I love you still, spite of——" Here he paused. But Ella's form and face relaxed not in their lofty carriage and expression, and he continued thus; "*Rack me not*, I conjure you, with this cold contemptuous silence; say but that you are innocent; say but that these scrawls are vile impostures."

"What! when you have yourself pronounced them true? What! condescend to assure the poor dupe of an anonymous slander that I am wronged and innocent? Never. You are welcome, sir, to believe what you please, and from this moment I desire that we may be strangers to each other; the terms of our engagement were such as to make a dissolution of it easy."

"Then be it so—and let us never meet again," replied Colonel Vane, enraged and indignant in his turn; "we never *will* meet again, and the *poor dupe* bids you an eternal adieu."

So saying, he rushed out of the cottage, and was out of sight in a moment, leaving Ella motionless, with her eyes fixed on the door through which he passed. But when she recovered herself, "Where is the child?" cried Ella. "In the cradle. Shall I bring it to you?" answered the woman. "No. Take it away, take her away, I will not see it, lest I——." Here tears, friendly tears, came to her relief, and after giving way to them some considerable time, she was able to walk home with slow and faltering step. However, she pursued her course, every moment expecting to see Colonel Vane cross her path, and beg her to listen to him once more; for could he really have seen her for the last time, and bidden her farewell for ever? No—it seemed impossible. But she reached home without encountering him, and even without seeing him at a distance; and as soon as she entered the house she stole into her own apartment, and, having undressed, went to bed. Then ringing for her maid, she told her she was unwell, and desired not to be disturbed till she rang again. But it was not rest which she sought, for well she knew that rest must be a stranger to her eyes. She only wanted the still solitude of her bed, the friendly concealment of her closely drawn curtains to veil the eyes weighed down by tears, not sleep; and to enable her, undisturbed by the look of pity or curiosity, to live over again the painful events of the last hour, and endeavour to act by the suggestions, if possible, of unprejudiced reflection. But what was the prominent image in her mind? Her lover influenced by a base, anonymous slanderer to suspect her of incontinence, and convinced of the truth of the slander by the evidence of his own senses! And was the man who could thus suspect, and thus believe, deserving of her love, or capable of making her happy? No, surely not; and her indignant soul revolted at his influence, and resolved to shake it off for ever. But were not his suspicion and his belief excusable? Had he not always disapproved her manners, and always on his own rigid principles been apprehensive of what such conduct might lead to? And was not all that the letters pointed out true? Had she not dismissed her servants on entering Wales? Was there not a child at a cottage whom she visited clandestinely, caressed, and wept over? and had not Colonel Vane, the man whom she loved, and meant to marry, and from whom, therefore, she ought to have had *apparently* no concealments,—had not he seen her caressing and weeping over this child, and stealing to her cradle when others were still wrapt in unconscious slumbers? Would not *any* man have been startled at such coincidence? and was it not, therefore, pardona-

ble in a man of Colonel Vane's nature, and pre-conceived opinions, to believe her guilty, in the first transports of his surprise, and to act, especially when treated as she treated him, upon the impulse of his first impressions, and the result of first appearances?

I am sure that there exists not a man or woman of an affectionate and generous nature, who would not much rather blame themselves, than blame the object of their esteem and tenderness; and I am also sure that there is no feeling so difficult to be borne, as the conscious degradation in one's esteem, of the object one has fondly adored.

Ella's nature was affectionate, was generous; and as soon as she could succeed in exculpating her lover, and inculpating herself, much of her agony subsided, and her offended pride, her sense of injured innocence, lost considerable of their power to distress her. "I exhibited too much pride, too much bad temper," she said to herself, — "I should have considered the disposition of the man, and made allowances for it; but he will *return*, at least I hope he will; and then, painful and difficult, in my opinion and with my conviction, as the task will be, I will disclose the whole secret to him, and satisfy even the wildest of his jealous apprehensions!" These thoughts, these soothing thoughts, though at first they fluctuated, at length became stationary and uppermost in the mind of Ella; and at five o'clock she rose, dressed for dinner, and made her appearance at table. But her swelled eyelids, her pale cheek, and her abstracted air, would have been sufficient of themselves to convince her anxious friends that her illness was of the mind, not of the body, had they not been informed by an officer who called at Bower Wood, that he had seen Colonel Vane, looking very ill, and even agitated in air and manner, set off for London in the mail-coach that day at three, and that he had told him he did not know when he should return. With this sudden and unexpected departure the guests at Bower Wood feared that Ella's continuation in her own room was connected, and as soon as they beheld her they felt all their fears confirmed.

Ella however did not mention Colonel Vane, and she kept up her spirits, by the hope that she should either see him or hear from him before the evening; but when nine o'clock arrived, and he neither came nor sent, her fortitude forsook her, and it was with difficulty she could attend to or answer any question proposed to her. Mrs. Belmont, one of her guests, seeing her absence of mind, thought that it would relieve her mind, perhaps, were she to have an opportunity given her of talking on the subject that oppressed her. Accordingly, she said, "So Colonel Vane has deserted us to-day!"

"He has, indeed, I fear," replied Ella blushing, "I do not think he will come now."

"Come now!" cried Mr. Belmont. "No, certainly not — surely you know that he is gone to London?"

"To London!" faintly exclaimed Ella, falling back in her chair, and fixing her eyes wildly on Mr. Belmont, who gave as succinctly as possible the intelligence he had received.—Without speaking, Ella immediately took a candle, and running out of the room did not stop till she once more reached her own apartment, and, locking herself in, gave way to the agony of her soul.—"Gone! gone *indeed!* perhaps never to return!" The idea was insupportable, and she passed the night in wretchedness easier to be imagined than described. But the next morning a short but refreshing slumber after day-break brought with it calmer feelings and more soothing thoughts. If Colonel Vane had ever loved her, and if he was the good and honourable man she thought him, he would write to her in a few days, or he would return; and as the sweetness of her temper, aided by her habitual piety and resignation, led her on *principle* to dwell on the *bright* rather than the *gloomy* side of her prospects, she arose resolved not to distress her companions by the indulgence of grief that it would give them pain to witness, and excite in them a fruitless, tormenting wish at the same time to remove.

Colonel Vane, meanwhile, was arrived in London, after a journey which, as he repented of it during the greatest part of the way, was therefore of the most painful and disagreeable nature. And what was he going to do in London? what had he gained by leaving W——? and what had he accomplished? He had contrived by so doing to give immediate publicity to his rupture with Ella, which, unless it was really to be eternal, had better not have been known at all. But was it, or was it not, an eternal rupture? Might she not explain every thing to his satisfaction, and forgive his suspicions?—No;—she had *herself* dismissed him, scornfully dismissed him, desiring never to see him *more*, and refusing to answer any interrogatories. And would not an innocent woman, proud and indignant under the sense of injury, have acted thus? But then could a guilty woman have acted otherwise? He did not know what to think; and so lost was he in his own reflections, that the mail-coach had reached the inn-yard, and his servant had asked him several times whether he would have a hackney-coach called, before he recollected where he was, and was capable of giving orders. At length he found himself seated at breakfast at a coffee-house, and had next to consider his future destination. But Ella and Bower Wood, the future happiness which he had expected, and the present which he had so recently enjoyed, were still and ever present to his imagination, and he found that he could do nothing and resolve on nothing till he had written to Ella.—As soon as he

had formed this resolution his mind felt relieved, and his letter was such a one as must, had it reached the place of its destination, have had all the effect which he desired. He conjured her to make allowances for his disposition, and to consider how much appearances were against her,—to ask her own heart whether, in their circumstances, she was not to blame in having a secret unconfided to him?—and after professions of the fondest and most devoted attachment, he *conjured* her, if she still loved him, or if she had *ever* loved him, or if she had even common humanity, to write to him immediately, and explain away entirely, if she *could*,—and he did not doubt her ability to do so,—the causes of his distress, and the grounds of the anonymous accusation. If she did this, he would immediately return to W——, and they would jointly endeavour to find out his mischievous, but in some respects, only too well-informed correspondent.

Having written this letter, on which, spite of all his manliness and all his efforts, a tear or two had fallen, Colonel Vane unfortunately gave it to his servant to put into the post-office. This man happened, on his way thither, to meet a former fellow-servant whom he had not seen for some time, and was prevailed upon to go to a public house with him. The consequence was, that having been up all night on the top of a coach, he was very soon intoxicated; and the letter was forgotten; and that, after accompanying his companion to different ale-houses, and reeling about the streets in almost unconscious inebriety, he did not reach the coffee-house where his master had taken up his abode till four o'clock in the afternoon, and only just time enough to go to bed and sleep off the fumes of intoxication before the Colonel returned at eleven o'clock at night.

Colonel Vane had wandered forth, he scarcely cared whither, till he found himself at Grosvenor gate, and was tempted by the fineness of the morning, a clear and frosty morning in January, to walk along the as yet lonely footpath on the side of the park. Uniformity of motion is certainly in unison with the sameness of incessant uneasiness on one subject, and Colonel Vane walked at least three hours at the same speed, backwards and forwards, on the same spot, unconscious of passing objects and of the lapse of time. At length, however, his attention was attracted by a gentleman, who, with his hat pulled over his eyes, was running rather than walking on the opposite path, and seemed like himself, for he too ran to and fro on the same spot, to be too much absorbed in his own feelings to attend to any thing external. The appearance of cheerfulness, if it had attracted, would not have fixed the attention of Colonel Vane at such a moment; but there was a something almost akin to madness in the restless gait of this man, that irresistibly drew and fixed the eyes of the Colonel upon him;—and almost involuntarily he left his own path and crossed him on his. He crossed so near him that the gentleman could not help starting, and as he did so their eyes met. The recognition was immediate and mutual, and Colonel Vane found that the person who had thus interested him was a Colonel Rivers, of the —— regiment, who had been his school-fellow, whom he had ever esteemed, though circumstances had shaped their course differently in life, and whom he was even delighted to see again. But his pleasure was soon damped; for Colonel Rivers wrung his hand in a sort of speechless agony, and burst into tears.

"Good heavens!" cried Colonel Vane, "my dear Rivers, what can this mean? Are *you*, too, unhappy?" It was some moments before Colonel Rivers could speak with sufficient composure to inform him that his wife whom he loved with the most devoted affection, had ever since her last lying-in exhibited symptoms of a decline; that though she was not likely to recover, she might linger many months; and that his regiment was then under sailing orders for the East Indies.

The afflicted generally imagine their own sorrows the most difficult to be borne, and are jealous of their supremacy in suffering. But Colonel Vane felt the difference of an affliction without hope, to one which hope alleviated; he also believed, when successive years had proved "the wife still dearer than the bride," that the agony of eternal separation must excel every other species of anguish; and that Colonel Rivers' farewell to his dying wife, would exhibit the very acme of human trials.

"What can I say to you, my dear Rivers!" replied Colonel Vane affectionately pressing the arm he held, "I could tell you,

> 'Each has his sufferings, all are men
> Condemn'd alike to groan;'

but I conceive that your trial is beyond that of most men — and I pity you from my soul." There was nothing consolatory certainly in this speech, in one sense of the word; yet Colonel Rivers felt soothed by it, and still more by the tone and manner in which it was uttered. Here was a man who acknowledged the greatness of his misery, and who entered into, who understood his feelings!

"My dear Vane," said Colonel Rivers, "what a comfort it is to me to have met you! If you can forgive the selfishness that dares invite you to the house of sickness and of sorrow, perhaps you will spend the day with me?"

"Most gladly," replied Colonel Vane, while his friend little thought that at that moment the house of mourning had more charms for him than the house of gladness.

"My poor Sophia will be glad to see you, Vane," said Colonel Rivers, "she is better in

an evening; indeed quite herself; but her nights are dreadful. I had not my clothes off last night, and sitting up had made me so chilly and uncomfortable, that I came to take a run in the park in order to warm and rouse myself, and also to combat painful feelings. You remember Sophia, Vane? 'T was soon after we married we saw you in town."

"Remember her! I do indeed; she is not a woman to be forgotten, Rivers; I thought her a pattern of female loveliness, mild, modest, delicate!—"

"And to think that I must lose her, Vane!"

"But is there *no* hope?"—and immediately Colonel Rivers, though professing that his hopes were over, convinced Colonel Vane, by the favourable symptoms he enumerated, that he did at times flatter himself that, at least if he could stay with her, she might struggle through. But the idea of his departure, and in order to go into a service of actual danger, if he survived the voyage, was more than her present weakness could bear up against, and the hour of his bidding her farewell would probably be the signal of her dissolution.

"Horrible!" exclaimed Colonel Vane with great emotion. "Spare me, dear Rivers, I cannot bear it!" And Colonel Vane did not speak again till they reached Colonel Rivers' house. He found his wife in a quiet sleep, the first of many days; and the feeling of hope which it excited, restored to him some of his usual cheerfulness; and he, though evidently Colonel Vane did not, enjoyed the hours which, no longer claimed by affectionate solicitude, were given to the enjoyments of friendly converse. But Rivers soon saw that his friend endured rather than relished conversation, and that his look was that of abstraction; and as he had heard of his attachment and engagement, he feared, though he was too delicate to mention the subject, that Colonel Vane's unhappiness proceeded from that quarter.

Though Colonel Rivers talked of subjects quite foreign to his own distresses, he frequently recurred to them again, and he mentioned with great anguish his inability to negotiate an exchange, which he had once hopes of doing; and as he said this, he saw almost with alarm a sort of wild expression pass over the countenance of Colonel Vane, while at the same time he started from his seat, and walked with rapid strides across the room. They were called at tea-time to the dressing-room of the invalid, who, being informed that Colonel Vane was with her husband, earnestly desired to see him, and had caused herself to be dressed and seated in her great chair to await his visit.

Colonel Vane's heart beat with agitation, spite of himself, at the idea of seeing the woman whom he had last seen in all the pride of youth, beauty, and happiness, now struggling with a mortal disease, and agonizing that heart of which she had then been only the hope and the delight. But he saw little change in her appearance, the close dress of sickness hid its ravages,—it was her hand alone, thin, and nearly transparent, that betrayed her real situation, and contradicted the brilliancy of her colour, and the lustre of her eyes.—Fever not only lighted up her features, but gave playfulness to her conversation; and she seemed, while approaching apparently to the verge of death, like a bird of beautiful plumage hovering over a dark and deep abyss. While she was thus amusing herself by conversing, and *alarming* while she *entertained* her husband and his friend, who listened to her with "fearful joy," Colonel Rivers was called out of the room on business, and Colonel Vane left with the invalid.

"Come nearer to me," said she, "I wish to speak seriously to you. This is a sad business, Colonel Vane,—I mean my poor husband's not being able to effect an exchange; —for it will be the death of me, I know, though I do not tell him so because it would distress him. I should get well if he could but stay and nurse me,—of that I am *sure;* for ever since he got leave of absence, and came to me, I have been so much better! It is so different, you know, to be watched by eyes that love one, and to be waited upon by the hand of affection! I protest that the medicines I have received from my poor William, have had more effect than any I took before he came, and the food which he cut for me has been more nourishing.—You smile, Colonel Vane, (he did smile, but it was with tears in his eyes,) but I assure you all this is *true*—and then I sleep better when I know he is near to watch my slumbers, and that my eyes when I awake will open on his."

The egotism of the sick and the dying is as interesting in proportion as that of other people is wearisome and disgusting; and Colonel Vane listened with respectful and affectionate attention to the incessant volubility of this amiable sufferer, while every word which she uttered relative to the exchange, and her assertion that her death would be the certain consequence of her husband's departure, sunk deep into his memory, laying up a store for future consideration.

"Oh! Colonel Vane," continued Mrs. Rivers, "Rivers has been the very breath of life to me from my earliest days. We have loved each other from childhood! and I do not remember to have ever looked with complacency on any man's face but his, or known pleasure from the attention of any other of his sex.* I never bought even a ribbon without consulting

* "Qu'il est digne d'envie le sort de la femme qui peut avoir ainsi conservé la plus parfaite unité dans sa destinée, et n'emporte au tombeau qu'un souvenir! c'est assez pour une vie."

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him;—when present with me, I never saw any one but William; when absent, his eye, like to the eye of the Deity, seemed still upon me; and I never spoke, or looked, or acted, but as I fancied he would direct or approve."

"Angelic woman!" cried Colonel Vane, kissing with a sort of reverence her meagre, burning hand, "would that I could have been loved thus!"

"Doubt not but you will be so loved!" replied Mrs. Rivers smiling, "if you have made a proper choice,—for so do all virtuous women love."

At this moment Colonel Rivers returned for a few minutes, and as Colonel Vane remarked the look of confiding and even exclusive tenderness which she gave him, his pity amounted to anguish at the thought that his friend must soon behold that look no more, and he was forced to turn to the window to conceal his emotion. When he was again left alone with Mrs. Rivers, for Colonel Rivers was forced to leave them for a few minutes more, he saw that the exultation of disease was over, and that it was succeeded by its languor and lowness. "Oh, Colonel Vane!" said she, "remember, if love like ours has its pleasures, it has also its pangs! and think that in proportion to the happiness of our existence together, will be the agony of our parting. O that parting! And to undergo it when I am certain, if William could but stay with me, he would save my life!" As she said this, Colonel Rivers entered unperceived; and the agony into which her words threw him was so great, and gave birth to a scene so tender and so distressing, that Colonel Vane vowed within himself, if Ella's answer to his letter was not satisfactory, and did not prove beyond dispute that her happiness depended on a union with him, he would offer himself in exchange for his friend, and brave the united dangers of battle and of climate. But he justly considered that he had no right to sport with the happiness of Ella, and that it was only as a free and disengaged man he could with propriety take the place of Colonel Rivers, and do all in his power to save from dissolution a union at once the object of his envy and admiration.

With these feelings, these convictions, and these resolves, he returned to his hotel. His servant was only just risen and dressed when he returned. "You put that letter into the post, I hope, James?" said Colonel Vane.

"Letter, sir! O dear, yes,—certainly, sir," was the answer; but then, and only then, had James recollected there was such a letter; and he felt first in one pocket, then in another; but no letter was there, nor in his waistcoat pocket, nor in the bed, nor by the bed-side;—in short, the letter was lost, he knew not how; or whether, before he was drunk, or while he was so, he had really put it into the post-office. If not, and if he really had dropped it in the street, he trusted that some one would pick it up and carry it to the office. But he flattered himself; the letter remained where it was lost; and as James was not honest enough to own his carelessness to his master, Colonel Vane kept wondering from day to day that Ella did not answer his letter; while Ella was feeling equal wonder that he did not write. Yes, Ella from day to day was watching, vainly watching, for the arrival of the post; and though with that absence of selfishness which distinguished her, she struggled to conceal her wretchedness from her guests, they easily perceived that her laugh was without mirth, and her smile was without serenity.

While Ella was thus a prey to unavailing anxiety, she received a summons from her lawyer to repair to London on business, as she was now of age, and her presence was necessary in order to sign some papers. The occupation of business and change of scene could not have occurred at a more fortunate moment; and as Ella's London guests were on the eve of returning to the metropolis, her journey was rendered as pleasant as it could be in her distressed state of mind by their protection and society; and in London she might hope to hear or see something of Colonel Vane. Thither, therefore, she repaired full of anxious expectation, leaving strict orders to have all letters sent after her to the house of her solicitor. But from the first hour of her journey to the last, Ella, as long as there was light to distinguish objects, looked eagerly from the windows of the carriage, fancying every horseman was Colonel Vane, or that every chaise or mail-coach contained him. She was under the same delusion as she drove along the streets of the metropolis; her fancy pictured still the image which her eyes pined to behold, till the carriage stopped in Russell-square, and she found herself welcomed by her solicitor and his family.

Colonel Vane during this time was as anxiously waiting the appearance of the general postman in the street of his hotel; but a fortnight had now elapsed, and he had nearly convinced himself Ella was silent because she could not, dared not tell the truth; in short, he construed her silence into a proof of guilt, and was resolved, as his life was of no value now to any one, that he would offer himself in the place of Colonel Rivers, and at every risk to his own life endeavour to save that of perhaps the *only* estimable wife (his mother excepted) whom he had ever known, and who was really seemingly better from, as she declared, the watchful attention of her husband.—"But I will not be hasty, I will wait a day or two longer; she may be ill!" and as this thought came over his mind, a flood of tenderness overwhelmed his soul, and he felt that to quit England and Ella perhaps for ever, was an effort beyond his power to make.—Colonel Rivers had now, by the advice of her physician, borne his drooping wife to the milder air of Devonshire; and Colonel Vane, deprived of their

society, which enabled him to fly from the agonies of his mind, was now in the habit of going to the theatre in order to escape from himself—when lo! as he had once before done, he beheld the woman whose image was ever present to his thoughts, and whom he had so lately fondly fancied ill both in mind and body from his sudden desertion, comfortably seated in the dress-boxes, and surrounded by smiling women and attentive men! True, Ella looked pale, ill, and almost dejected; but her dress was studied and elegant, and the passing scenes on the stage seemed capable, when her companions allowed her to attend to them, of attracting her attention and beguiling her of a smile.—Could *he* attend? could *he* smile? No, no; he felt too acutely to be so easily stolen from himself!—But *she* felt nothing; and *she* could hasten to the metropolis for the purposes of amusement!

Thus unjustly did he judge of Ella from appearances which were as much against himself; for, had she discovered him at the play, might she not as reasonably have attributed his journey to London, and his visit to the theatre, to the desire of entertainment and a love of pleasure?

While he was thus thinking, and gazing on Ella the whole time, with looks "more in sorrow than in anger," envying and hating at the same time a very handsome youth who was continually leaning down to speak to Ella, and evidently unconscious of the presence of any one but herself,—a young man, whom he scarcely knew, entered into conversation with him, and, being vain of his knowledge of great people, was officiously pointing out the box of Lord this, and Lady such-an-one; adding,—"His lordship is a charming man, I have the honour to know him well;"—or, "Her ladyship is the most delightful of women, and an example to her sex.—But there, Colonel Vane, in that box is a lady of a different description," pointing to the private box in which was Ella,—"that is a very fine woman, though somewhat passé both in face and reputation,—Lady Harriet Bentham."

"Lady Harriet Bentham!" exclaimed Colonel Vane, thrown off his guard; "I protest so it is!"—And Ella was at the play with a Lady Harriet Bentham!

"Yes, sir," resumed the young man,—"there is Lady Harriet, and with her Miss Mordaunt, the great heiress, *as usual*."

"As usual, sir? What do you mean by that?"

"Just what the words import, Colonel;—that Miss Mordaunt is very frequently with Lady Harriet Bentham, whose husband's nephew, that pretty young man, is desperately in love with Miss Mordaunt; and it has long been supposed it will be a match."

A dagger would have given less pain to Colonel Vane than this speech;—but surely it could not be true;—if Ella had long known Lady Harriet, he must have heard her say so;—or, perhaps, conscious that he whould disapprove her having such an acquaintance, she concealed her knowledge of her carefully from him; for she had proved that she *could* hide secrets from the man she professed to adore and meant to marry! Alas! when confidence is once destroyed between the lover and the mistress, the husband or the wife, it is incredible what impossible things they will not believe of each other, and never, never is confidence once weakened to be restored to its primitive strength.

"But are you *sure*, sir, that Miss Mordaunt is, or has been, much with Lady Harriet Bentham?"

"Why, really, sir," replied the young man, *pertly*, piqued at having his knowledge in a certain way doubted, "I think I *must* know, as I have the honour to be rather high in her ladyship's good graces; and at Malvern and at Cheltenham both, I have seen Miss Mordaunt, I am sure, unless I am losing my memory, under Lady Harriet's protection."

Colonel Vane at hearing this started up and almost gasped for breath.—"What!" said he to himself, "and have I been on the point of marrying the companion, the protegée, the pupil, probably, of Lady Harriet Bentham?—Now then I can believe *any thing;* and *now* I can with pleasure resign her to that grinning fool yonder; for I would sooner perish than take for my wife the intimate of Lady Harriet Bentham. No, no; and her sight is become hateful to me. One look more, and then, fascinating but destructive, fatal woman, farewell for ever!" He did gaze on her once more; and making a great effort, he then rushed out of the box and returned to his hotel.

Who can calculate on the mischiefs resulting from the weak boastings of vanity, uttered by impudence and supported by falsehood? Who can say to what degradation to oneself, or destruction to another, the indulgence of vanity may not lead? It may be only weakness in the first instance; in the second it may be vice. This Mathews only began with the paltry wish of raising himself in Colonel Vane's eyes, by showing that he was known to the noble and the fashionable; but he ended in absolute falsehood, as soon as he fancied that knowledge questioned;—for he never saw Miss Mordaunt with Lady Harriet either at Malvern or Cheltenham, though he had seen her there with Mrs. Anne Mordaunt; and the real fact was, that Ella had never till that evening beheld Lady Harriet. But who was this woman, with whom a man like Colonel Vane, nice and rigid in his ideas of propriety, would not allow his wife in any degree to associate?—She was an earl's daughter, but the wife of a private gentleman; and no woman ever perhaps practised more scrupulously the Christian rule of "Do as you would be done by."

Mr. Bentham was rich, therefore she married him; he was weak and timid, therefore he indulged her; he had his vices, and consequently from a principle of justice he pardoned hers;—and as he well knew, that if he continued to live with her, even virtuous women of unblemished reputation would, for her rank's sake, continue to do the same, he obligingly resolved to take all her conduct in good part; for the countenance of a husband to a wife is like the cover of a secretary of state, and franks any rubbish through the post-office of society that stands in need of its assistance.

Lady Harriet acted up to the holy principle I have before mentioned, by showing to the tender weaknesses of other women that indulgence which she required for her own. Hence her house, a house consisting of various apartments, was always at the service of her friends, whether for the single tête-à-tête, or the supper consisting of many tête-à-têtes, or understood arrangements, or the busy crowd so favourable to conscious lovers, or the dinner, to present admiring strangers to each other and facilitate the means of more intimate and frequent meetings.—*Amiable* benevolence! generous consideration for the kind-hearted of both sexes! But Colonel Vane was not of a humour to regard this virtue in Lady Harriet with any thing like complacence; and while he reflected on her convenient friendship, and still more convenient mansion, one cannot blame him for thinking with aversion of marrying the protegée of Lady Harriet, and for feeling the warning in the anonymous letters as being in reality the warning of a friend.—He walked to his hotel in agonies that almost deprived him of the power of exertion; while the contemptible being who had occasioned them was saying to some of his acquaintance who entered the box where he sat, it was a pity they had not come sooner, that he might have presented them to his friend the celebrated Colonel Vane, who was just gone.

After a night of anguish, yet of firm, well-founded resolves, Colonel Vane arose very late in the day, determined to write to Ella once more; and, in bidding her a *last* farewell, conjure her, if she wished to keep only the *remnant* of reputation, to break off all acquaintance with Lady Harriet Bentham. And while preparing to put his design in execution, the post brought him a letter from Colonel Rivers, written in a state nearly of distraction; —for it informed him the purser was already gone to Portsmouth, and he was on the eve of murdering his adored wife by bidding her a last adieu!—"Not so, Rivers, not so!" exclaimed Colonel Vane nearly choked by emotion. "I will go—yes, I *will* go to the War-office this instant;" and he immediately set off. As he passed through Bond street the carriage of Lady Harriet Bentham passed him, and in it he beheld her Ladyship, Ella, and the nephew of Mr. Bentham; the latter listening with a blushing cheek, downcast eye, and pleased expression of countenance, as he thought, to this supposed rival. "It is enough, it is enough," said he to himself. "No no—I have no regrets *now*, and welcome India, welcome years of banishment!"

He went to the War-office, preferred his petition to take the place of Colonel Rivers, and it was willingly accepted. As soon as the business was settled, Colonel Vane ordered a post-chaise and four, and travelling all night arrived at Sidmouth late the next day. But late as it was, he would not, since he had such good news to communicate, delay seeing Colonel Rivers till morning. He therefore instantly repaired to his lodgings, endeavouring to forget the misery he had experienced on the road, in the benevolent pleasure which he felt that moment, and to lose all sense of his own blighted prospects in the revived ones of his friend and his truly valuable wife. When he applied at the tied-up knocker to the door, he felt almost choked with emotion; but that Mrs. Rivers still survived he learnt, or fancied he might conclude, from the knocker's being still muffled. If so, he came perhaps to save her life, at least to lengthen it; and it was in a scarcely audible voice that he inquired whether Colonel Rivers was at home.

"He is, sir," replied the servant, with tears in his eyes, "but he can see no one; for he goes to Portsmouth to-morrow, and we fear my poor mistress will hardly survive his going."

"I must see him, however; and I am sure he will see me," replied Colonel Vane, in a voice scarcely articulate. "Tell him his friend Colonel Vane is here."

The man replied by a look of incredulity, but immediately went to his master.

As soon as Colonel Rivers heard who was below, he came down to welcome him. "My dear Vane," said he, "this is kind; I know you come to support in her great trial my poor dying——" He could say no more, while Colonel Vane had wrung his hand, had suppressed his rising sobs innumerable times, before he could articulate one word, though that word was to raise Colonel Rivers from despondency to hope, from positive misery to comparative happiness. At length, however, he said, "No, Rivers, I am not come for the purpose you mention—for your wife has no such trial to undergo. I come to tell you that I have procured an exchange for you, and your substitute sets off to-morrow morning, in your place, for Portsmouth!"

Colonel Rivers was for a moment too much overwhelmed to be able to speak, as much overcome by joy as he was before by sorrow; but when he could speak, he could hardly find words strong enough to thank Colonel Vane

for the great trouble which he knew he must have taken to do him so great and difficult a service. "And now, then," added he, "you must do me another—you must break the glad tidings to Sophia; for I am too much agitated to do it, and should alarm her." He then led the way; while Colonel Vane joyfully anticipated the gratification, a gratification for which he had paid very dear, of witnessing the happiness which he had done so much to insure.

"Sophia," said Colonel Rivers, "here is our friend Vane, our best friend, our friend indeed!" Mrs. Rivers raised her head, and, fixing her dim eyes on Colonel Rivers, replied, "Why did you leave me? I can ill spare you one moment of the few that remain for me, even to Colonel Vane."

"You hear her!" cried Colonel Rivers, and rushed out of the room.

"There, now he is gone again!" exclaimed Mrs. Rivers; "it is very cruel in him; for you know, Colonel Vane, we are to part to-morrow for ever!"

"I hope not, I trust not! I am *sure* not," replied Colonel Vane, taking her moist hand in his, "I trust you will pass many happy years together yet." Mrs. Rivers turned her large expressive eyes on him as he spoke, as if to reproach him with mockery of her situation. Colonel Vane could not endure the look; and leaning his head against the side of her chair, "Forgive me," he said, "but emotion, emotion of a most pleasant nature, overcomes me. Mrs. Rivers, you have as yet borne up against affliction; can you, do you think, support the emotions of joy."

"Joy!" she answered, seizing his arm and gazing on him as if she would read his soul, "Joy! can there be any joy for me now! Did I not tell you he was to leave me to-morrow?"

"But suppose he is not to leave you for days, or weeks, or perhaps months?"

"And is it so?" she exclaimed with a scream of exultation.

"Yes,—an exchange has been effected, and *I* go instead of him to India!"

It was impossible for nature weakened as her's had been, to support this sudden and overwhelming joy; and when Colonel Rivers re-entered the room, on Colonel Vane's calling for help, he found his wife fainted in Colonel Vane's arms. But life was not long suspended, she revived to meet those eyes of love fixed on her, which she feared she was soon to meet no more; and in a transport of holy joy and gratitude, if I may so apply the term, this woman, whose eyes had never rested on any man but her husband, or seen any one beside him in the creation, now threw her arm round the neck of Colonel Vane, and pressed her tearful cheek to his.

"Rivers," said she, "how can we thank him?"

"No better than by letting him witness the happiness he has conferred."

"But oh! to think that *he* must leave us so soon, and go where he is going!"

"What is all this?" replied Colonel Rivers; "you surely will stay with us a few days!"

"How can I? The purser is on board, and I must go at dawn; for it is *I* who go instead of *you*, Rivers!"

I will not lengthen my story unnecessarily by describing what Colonel Rivers felt and said, nor how little the unhappy disappointment which Colonel Vane had met with, and which he honestly confessed made all scenes alike to him, was able to reconcile him to the idea that for his sake Colonel Vane was going to encounter danger in various shapes, and that his happiness was purchased at so dear a rate.

But Colonel Vane's departure would probably save his beloved wife, and she was certainly dearer than his benefactor.

"But to business, Rivers," said Colonel Vane; "I shall leave you a list of the things I shall want to be sent after me; and your outfit of linen, &c. as we are almost of the same size, will serve me on the voyage." To be brief; at dawn Colonel Vane set off on his journey, with a mind supported and cheered by a consciousness of the good he had probably secured to two most amiable beings, and followed by their blessings and their prayers; while still the look of comfort and quiet, which beamed on him from the eyes of Mrs. Rivers even through the tears she shed when she took leave of him, haunted his imagination as he travelled, bright and cheering to his lonely and melancholy way, as a sunbeam to the wanderer over the trackless waste. Too wretched for repose, too restless for a moment's delay, Colonel Vane stopped not till he reached Portsmouth. He went immediately on board, and tried in the novelty of the scene around him to forget the misery that occasioned him to be there.

But to return to Ella, and to explain why she was at the play with Lady Harriet Bentham. Mrs. Rushbrooke, the wife of Ella's solicitor, a most respectable lawyer, was, in her way, as respectable as her husband—with the single drawback of coveting what she could not attain, viz. general and easy intercourse with persons of high rank and fashion. But she sometimes contrived to pick up a few stray lords and ladies as she perambulated the gay scenes of a crowded assembly, who, having no objection to grace a table filled with choice dishes and fine wines, were contented to be on the visiting list of Mrs. Rushbrooke, and admitted her in return to their *sweeps* once a year. Some of these titled guests were, though of high rank, not of high fashion, and were thinly scattered in Mrs. Rushbrooke's assemblies, like pine-apples in a dessert, too rare and precious to be had in profusion, and, like pine-apples, were sometimes a little decayed at the core. But they looked well, and what

was better, their titles sounded well; and Mrs. Rushbrooke considered nothing else. Still it would have been rather wonderful that Lady Harriet Bentham should become Mrs. Rushbrooke's guest, and take her with her to her private box at the opera and playhouse, as Lady Harriet was not only a woman of high rank, but of the first order of fashion, if it had not been generally known, first, that the lady was poor, and Mrs. Rushbrooke's purse was plenteously supplied by her husband; secondly, that Mr. Rushbrooke had a nephew who was coming forward at the Bar, whose talents, person, and manners were such as to make him a favourite in that great world where his uncle's wife vainly wished to shine. But young Rushbrooke had pride; and Lady Harriet soon discovered, that one way to secure the affections of Rushbrooke would be to give consequence to his relations in his eyes, and that of a certain set, by giving them an entrée into fashionable life; and Mrs. Rushbrooke, too happy to be called upon, and visited, and taken into public by such a woman, to be nice with respect to the character of her patroness, eagerly accepted the proffered notice. Nor did Mrs. Rushbrooke at all suspect the *motive* of Lady Harriet's advance; for this her self-love forbade; and as she saw nothing reprehensible in the manners of Lady Harriet, she soon convinced herself that the world had blamed her unjustly, and therefore did not scruple to present Ella to her noble friend, and request her to chaperone the young heiress to the play; a proposal which was excessively acceptable to Lady Harriet, as she knew her husband's nephew admired Ella, and that her husband wished him to pay his addresses to her. To Ella, Lady Harriet and her character were equally unknown. Slander of every kind always was slow in its approach to Ella's door; for it knew that it was difficult to gain admittance there. Born of an ancient family, and possessed of great wealth, she was too conscious of her own importance in the scale of society, to suppose she could derive consequence from an appearance of knowledge of great people, and tales of fashionable frailties, even if such knowledge had not been disgusting to her. And when compelled to credit such tales, she would observe, that even in that line of life, so much more exposed to temptations than our own, it was the few, not the many, who brought themselves into notice by their vices—vices which the rank of the offenders made peculiarly conspicuous—for in all ranks of life she knew that the *many*, of both sexes, go on quietly in the common routine of their duties, equally unknown to public censure and public praise. She therefore thought that to stigmatize the whole of the nobility as profligate, because some of them stood forth conspicuous for their profligacy, was as just as it would be to pronounce that country wholly deficient in entire, habitable, and respectable mansions, in which a few ruined edifices forced themselves on the eye, rendered prominent and remarkable by being on an elevated situation.

It was not likely, therefore, that a woman of this character should be familiar with the errors of a Lady Harriet Bentham. But it is very certain that, had she known them, she would have declined the honour of being chaperoned by her ladyship, from a most Gothic idea of hers, that it would be no honour at all; and that to be a hanger-on of titled profligacy, however high its fashion, was beneath a virtuous and respectable woman. "The poor may be held in the iron fetters of necessity, but the rich are dragged behind the car of fashion by the golden chains of vanity."*

But thus fatally, as we have seen above, did the dirty vanity of a contemptible being operate on the mind of a rash and jealous one, to the prejudice and misery of an honourable and innocent woman, and to the destruction of the happiness of two of his fellow-creatures; though it is only too true, that as Ella was seen in company at the play with a woman of suspicious character, "appearances were against her," at least in the eyes of Colonel Vane.

The day but one after Ella had visited the theatre, she returned to Bower Wood, as business no longer required her presence in London; for she saw no likelihood of seeing Colonel Vane there; and if she was ever to be so happy as to receive a letter from him, she wished to be where she could give way to her anxiety, and indulge her expectations of hearing from him, unwatched by the eye either of curiosity or compassion; and at her own home only, which she determined for a short time should be a solitary one, could she indulge her feelings without indelicacy and without restraint. Thither, therefore, she was most anxious to return; for as Captain Clinton and her friend, who was now become his wife, were, unfortunately for Ella, stationed at Guernsey, she could not have their society, which would have been a great relief to her mind, and she consequently preferred having none at all. As soon as she reached home, her first inquiry was whether some letters or letter had not arrived, which through mistake or neglect had not been forwarded to her;—and when she learnt that no letter had reached Bower Wood, she felt a sad and oppressive sickness of the heart, to which it is not in the power of words to do justice. But against the subduing power of this feeling she was able to struggle, and she did struggle successfully, forcing herself to drive out every day, and showing herself as usual in the streets of W——, that she might not be denominated a poor love-lorn, disappointed damsel, as the

* See Tales of Fashionable Life.

sudden departure and absence of Colonel Vane must have excited, she well knew, the curious and gossipping spirit of a town like W——. But Ella had not resolution to go out till after the delivery of letters; and till her servant returned from the post, she used to walk backwards and forwards in a parlour which overlooked the back gate, that she might discover his approach as early as possible, and lose not a moment to ascertain the result of his inquiries. These inquiries, however, still continued unavailing; but at length came a letter from Mr. Belmont, which ended thus;—"Mrs. Belmont and myself were, as you will suppose, excessively astonished to hear of Colonel Vane's having sailed for the East Indies; but you, probably, have long known of his intentions;—I see by the papers that he has sailed some days."

The sudden desertion and the cruel protracted silence of Colonel Vane were circumstances which it had required all her fortitude to bear up against, even when cheered by a hope, however faint, that she might see him again;—but now, when she recollected that day after day, week after week, month after month, nay year after year, she should no more behold that face, or listen to that voice, which not to see and not to hear during a few short hours had so lately, so very lately, been to her a source of tender regret and a most painful privation, she loathed the sight of day, as it would not be gladdened by his presence; and the night was equally unwelcome, as it would no longer be precursor of the morning that would restore him to her sight. Still mixed with the agonies of affectionate regret were the suggestions of offended pride, and the consciousness of unmerited and unfeeling neglect. Nay, his conduct in not writing to her since his departure, especially before he sailed, and in order to make known to her his intentions, was such as, even in her partial eyes, to detract excessively from the amiableness of his character, and to make her reluctantly acknowledge to herself, that with a man of his disposition she could have had little chance of happiness. But still she loved him, passionately loved him; and when she thought of the dangers which probably awaited him, her heart died within her, and she could scarcely resist her inclination to give way to the inactivity of despondence, and allow it to blight all the prospects of her youth, and chill all the energies of her soul. But a letter from Mrs. Belmont roused her a little from the state into which she was falling. That lady had seen Colonel Rivers, who had given her a detailed account, which she transmitted to Ella, of his rencontre with Colonel Vane in the Park, and of his having been induced by compassion for him and his wife, added to the effect of his own disappointment, to take his place and abandon his native country, he having been, as he hinted to his friend, dismissed by the lady to whom he was engaged. Colonel Rivers added, that Colonel Vane's kindness had not been ineffectual,—that his beloved wife had mended daily when her peace of mind had been restored by the certainty of not losing his society, and that at length her disease had proved not a decline, but a vomica; and that, an abscess having burst on her lungs, she had recovered so much strength since her tranquillity was restored, as to be able to live through the consequent weakness, and would soon follow him by slow stages to W——, whither he was going in order to supply the place of Colonel Vane. "As I find by this account," added Mrs. Belmont, "*that you had dismissed Colonel Vane*, a circumstance I was before ignorant of, I thought it possible you might not be acquainted with the above detail, and therefore I have given it to you."

"Strange, inexplicable, inconsistent man! to feel so much for others, and so little for me!" exclaimed Ella, when she read the letter. "Did he suppose I had not my feelings as well as Mrs. Rivers, and that I should not suffer on the departure for India and its dangers, of that being with whom I had so lately expected to pass my life? Well, if he could so soon and so easily resign me, regardless of what I might suffer, or fancying me too callous for suffering, it is fit that I should listen to the suggestions of pride, not tenderness, and scorn to waste in the gloomy indolence of disappointed passion, those powers which were given me to be of use and service to my friends and fellow-creatures. I thank him, however, for his delicacy in simply stating that I had dismissed him, and not the cause of the anger which produced the dismissal; though no one but a man willing to be discarded would have acquiesced under a sentence evidently the result of pique and passion."

The arrival of Colonel Rivers and his interesting wife was expected by Ella with mixed pain and pleasure; but a termination was soon put to this agitation, for Mrs. Rivers had a relapse, which, though a slight one, so much alarmed her husband that he obtained a longer leave of absence, and resolved to remain in Devonshire till the summer months.

But the time now arrived which was to restore Colonel Vane to the undiminished esteem as well as love of Ella, and to substitute the yearnings of affectionate regret and the illusions of hope for the angry whisper of offended pride, and the complainings of outraged and despondent feelings. The letter which Colonel Vane wrote to her the day he reached London, and which was lost by his servant, had fallen out of his coat-pocket on an old tattered sofa which stood in the chamber that the man occupied at the coffee-house, and had insinuated itself into a slit of the sofa-case, under which it had completely disappeared; and there it remained till the case was taken

off for some purpose or other, on which occasion it was discovered uninjured, though much dirtied. Luckily, also, the servant who found it remembered the search for a letter which Colonel Vane's valet had made; in consequence of which the master of the coffee-house forwarded the recovered treasure according to the direction, enclosing it in an envelope, in which he stated all he knew concerning it. As soon as the agitated but delighted Ella received and read the letter, all the mystery of Colonel Vane's conduct disappeared, and all its cruelty vanished. She understood and she excused his not writing a second time, as this his first letter remained unanswered; and she could readily conceive how easily a man of his character was led by pique and disappointment united to a better inducement, the hope of saving and serving two amiable fellow-creatures, to take the step which had plunged her into so much misery; and while in the triumphs of her joy, at finding Colonel Vane innocent of the fault which she had imputed to him, she had mentally resolved to write to him, to excuse her apparent neglect, and then pass the term of his absence, whatever it might be, in utter seclusion, she received another letter from Colonel Vane, dated off St. Helen's, which though it excited in her the greatest astonishment and indignation, was welcome as a proof how tenderly he still loved, and how fondly he regretted her,—though as he declared, he would never have married the *friend and companion of Lady Harriet Bentham.* This letter was long, and contained a description of all his feelings since they parted. It told her how painfully his returning tenderness towards her had been chilled by seeing her at the play with Lady Harriet Bentham, and by learning that she had not only frequently been her companion in public, but was also her friend in private;—that thus frustrated in his hope, or even in his wish, to renew his engagement with her, he had resolved to quit England in pursuit of danger, and in all probability of death!—But that he could not rest without conjuring her with his parting breath, if she ever hoped to form a respectable connexion, to give up the society of Lady Harriet Bentham; as he was sure that no man worthy her acceptance would ever marry the friend and associate of so depraved a woman!

I will not attempt to describe the conflict of various emotions which agitated Ella while she read this letter of unfounded charges, and learnt that the busy lies of a stranger, and the indiscretion of Mrs. Rushbrooke had in a few short moments rendered her lover a self-banished man, and doomed her perhaps for years, if not for ever, to all the lingerings of anxious and disappointed affection! But superior to every other sensation was the dear consciousness that she was still beloved, and Colonel Vane guiltless of the faults she had attributed to him. "And when I shall write to him," she said to herself, "as I will do, a complete exculpation of myself in every particular; yes, then, even spite of distance and of absence, I shall, I am sure I shall, be comparatively happy!" In the meanwhile she resolved to lay a plan for her future life, and endeavour to find out a proper companion to reside with her. She also resolved to leave Bower Wood, as W—— and its society were become disagreeable to her; and determined, as the existence of the little Ella and its abode near her were discovered, to take her at once into the house under her acknowledged protection, and watch over her education with all a mother's care.

The neighbourhood and society of W—— were indeed grown disagreeable to Ella, from a consciousness that she had in it a secret enemy; and, as is always the mischievous consequence of anonymous letters, she looked around her with distrust and suspicion, and very often, perhaps, fancied an innocent person guilty of the base scrawls that had been the means of blasting her hopes of happiness, and driving her lover from his native land into scenes of danger, and possibly of destruction. Besides, she was well aware that the circumstances of her having a child under her care, whose parents were unknown, and who strongly resembled her in its deep-blue eyes, and the length and dark colour of its eyelashes, must call forth a number of degrading suspicions concerning her conduct, as also her journey into Wales, unattended by her servants; and it was clear from the anonymous letters, that this latter circumstance was as well known as the existence of the child. But it was not in her power to clear up the mystery; therefore she felt uncomfortable at the idea of living amongst those, who, though they continued to visit her because she lived in a fine house and gave splendid entertainments, would very likely have dropped her acquaintance had she been less favoured by fortune and by birth; and her departure from Bower Wood was finally resolved upon.

The house at Bower Wood was a modern one; that on her estate at Briardale was an ancient and Gothic mansion, and had about it a degree of melancholy grandeur, which better suited the now pensive cast of her mind; besides, every thing at the former residence painfully reminded her of Colonel Vane; and having let that place very advantageously for a term of years, she repaired with great alacrity to take possession of her new abode, and to be restored to the society of a lady who was married to the rector, and lived in the village; and who, in the beginning of her life, used to assist her aunt in her education. But a surprise awaited her at Briardale, which she scarcely knew whether to denominate painful or pleasing to her, though at last she considered it as deserving of the latter epithet. She discovered that Mrs. Vane, mother of Colonel Vane, had

lately hired and was come to reside in the manor house, which was within two miles of her own; and thus, if ever Colonel Vane should return, he would find her conduct had been, during his absence, continually exposed to the eye of his mother! whose censure she was at least sure of never deserving, though she was fearful that, if she knew her to be the cause of her son's leaving his country, Mrs. Vane might never bestow on her her regard and approbation. But I will ask Mrs. Elmsley's opinion, said Ella to herself. Accordingly, as soon as she had a fair opportunity, she asked her friend whether she thought it likely that Mrs. Vane would ever regard her with complacency, and be willing to visit her, since it was the dissolution of his engagement with her which occasioned Colonel Vane to leave England; "for though," added Ella, "Mrs. Vane has never treated her son with the usual tenderness of a mother, and avoided rather than courted his society, still she may be very willing to resent the conduct of another towards him, if she fancies that conduct to have been injurious."

"True," replied Mrs. Elmsley, "for that, alas! is human nature; but, strange as it may seem to you, I do not think there is any fear of Mrs. Vane's being prejudiced against you; for I am convinced she was, till you came hither, quite ignorant of your name."

"Impossible! for I know that Colonel Vane wrote to inform her of his probable marriage."

"No doubt; but he either never mentioned the name of the lady, or she has forgotten it; for she was at our house when you drove past in your barouche and four, with two outriders; and when she asked your name, and whether you were not the lady who was expected to reside at the long-empty house in the park, she neither started, nor looked grave nor inquisitive, when I told her who you were; and I am convinced she has with your name no unpleasant association, except that, as she is very proud, I believe, and likes the pomp and circumstance of wealth herself, she may have a feeling of jealousy of the style in which you made your *entrée*."

"I wish you may be right; but do you think she will call on me?"

"I fear not, as she keeps no company, and visits nowhere but at the rectory; however, I will invite you to meet her, and trust to your usual power of fascination to make her your friend."

The next day was Sunday; and as Mrs. Vane was regular in her attendance at church, Ella arose almost certain of seeing this, to her, formidable woman; and knowing that, unless she went early, she should feel embarrassed in going up the aisle, from the idea that she was observed by this dreaded censor, she drove to church before the usual time, and before any of the congregation were assembled. Ella felt almost ashamed of this weakness; yet who could wonder that the mother of her lover was an object of interest and alarm to her!

"She is very late," thought Ella,—when lo! a footman, in an old-fashioned rich livery with long tags on his shoulders, made way at the door for a tall majestic woman of a certain age, dressed in black, who appeared leaning on the arm of another footman, while the first who had appeared fell back, and walked behind her up the aisle, carrying a large prayer-book.

"This then," thought Ella, as with some effort she looked over the side of the pew, is the woman I long but dread to see!" But judge of her trepidation when the footman opened the door of the pew where Ella sat, and Mrs. Vane entered it! The truth was, the rain having come through the roof into the pew belonging to Ella, it had been judged right that, till the damage done to it could be repaired, she, as being a new comer, and a great lady, as well as Mrs. Vane, was to be shown into Mrs. Vane's seat.

Ella rose involuntarily on Mrs. Vane's entrance, but could hardly keep her feet when with a look of almost haughty surprise Mrs. Vane surveyed the unexpected intruder, and Ella saw in the still fine face of the mother, the dark and penetrating eyes of the son. Abashed, conscious, and rapidly changing colour, as she often did, she resolved to apologize for her intrusion, since she now suspected it to be such, as soon as Mrs. Vane had ended her prayer. But that lady, flattered as Louis the XIVth was said to be by causing embarrassment and emotion by the conscious power of his eye and dignity of his mien, seemed by a courteous wave of her hand, and bow of her head, to assure Ella that she was welcome, and to deprecate apologies; at this moment the service began, and all intercourse between them was suspended by devotion and decorum. But never had Ella before, in the presence of her Creator, felt so painfully affected by the presence of a fellow-creature; and for the first time in her life her thoughts wandered from their usual place of rest, and tears filled those eyes, which, hidden from human observation, were usually lifted in aid of silent or gently murmured prayer. However, she drew her veil over her face, and her emotion was known only to herself. When service was ended, the timid bashful manner in which Ella returned Mrs. Vane's low and stately curtsy had an unlooked-for charm for the latter, who had expected to see in the rich and admired heiress, a dashing, undaunted, consequential young woman; and when in a voice whose sweetness we have mentioned before, she faltered out a hope that she had not intruded, and an assurance that she had concluded the seat was her own, Mrs. Vane replied in language so obliging, and with a smile and countenance so like her son's, that

Ella could scarcely control her feelings; and she was very glad when Mrs. Elmsley came up to them, and drew Mrs. Vane's attention on herself.

Mrs. Elmsley soon saw by Mrs. Vane's manner and expression that she was pleased with her young friend, and instantly took advantage of this favourable moment to present Ella to her, who was as unable as Mrs. Elmsley to discover any indication in Mrs. Vane's look that her *name* was known to her associated with any painful consciousness.

So far all was right; and Ella went home conscious that her most immediate object in life, and her dearest wish, were now the prospect of becoming acquainted with Mrs. Vane, and making her her friend. The next day she went to drink tea at the rectory to meet Mrs. Vane; and at the close of the visit, which seemed satisfactory to both the guests, Ella was so fortunate as to be able to do Mrs. Vane a kindness. That lady's carriage having been overturned as it was coming for her, and too much injured to proceed, she was willing, being lame and corpulent, to be prevented walking home, and was contented therefore to suffer Ella to set her down at her own door. As she took her leave, Ella, with as much respect as if she had been addressing a queen, hinted a hope of being allowed to pay her respects at the manor-house.

"It is *my* duty to call on *you*," replied Mrs. Vane with quickness; "but I am a bad visiter, and go rarely from home."

"Without waiting for that ceremony, I should be only too proud to pay my respects to you, madam," said Ella; and the next day she left her card at the door. Thus was, she flattered herself, a foundation laid for acquaintance, especially as she learnt from Mrs. Elmsley that Mrs. Vane was quite charmed both with her person and her manners; and a circumstance only too soon occurred which made Ella rejoice that she had waived etiquette, and courted thus openly the acquaintance of this melancholy but respectable woman.

I have before said that the fortune which had been left to Mrs. Vane by a relation, was personal property, and this money she had entrusted entirely to the care of an eminent banker and intimate friend, the partner in a well-accredited house. But unforeseen events in the commercial world shook the credit of this house to its foundation; and in order to stop an alarming run on the bank, Mrs. Vane's friend, hoping to replace the money in a few days, ventured to use her property. But the ruin was too complete to be avoided; and a very few days afterwards witnessed the utter destruction of the firm in question, and the total ruin of Mrs. Vane's fortune; for nothing remained to her but a trifling sum settled on her by her husband, and which she brought him in marriage! Whatever Mrs. Vane might feel on this disastrous event, Ella's sensations were of a nature as painful, for she at first experienced the pangs of self-condemnation. "But for me," she exclaimed in agony, "her son would have been here, and his wealth would immediately have removed her poverty; however, as soon as this news reaches him, he, I am well convinced, will do even more than duty requires."

The proud are so apt to be rendered prouder by affliction, that Ella foresaw an intimacy with Mrs. Vane was now more unlikely than ever. True, having experienced the greatest of all losses, that of a husband whom she adored, Mrs. Vane could not, as she told Mrs. Elmsley, feel very acutely the loss of wealth; but then she was lame, in delicate health, and wanted a great deal of attendance, besides those little comforts and luxuries which sickness requires, and wealth only can bestow; and these she saw herself obliged to relinquish for some time at least, as months must elapse before Colonel Vane could learn her situation. Besides she had been the great lady of the village, and now she must leave the manor house, and hire a small house only just large enough for herself and one maid. Now she must walk backwards and forwards to church, or submit to be taken thither in the carriage of another! And Ella knew enough of the human heart, to feel that in this difficult conjuncture she must take especial care not to wound Mrs. Vane's delicacy and pride by too marked offers of attention and service, else she would alienate instead of attaching her; whereas if, on the contrary, she could contrive to be of use to her without any apparent intention of being so, she should very likely convert her into all that she desired.

It was for three Sundays only after she heard of her loss of fortune that Mrs. Vane absented herself from church. On the fourth she made her appearance, leaning no longer on the arm of one footman, and followed by another, but supported by a female servant and carrying her own prayer-book in her hand. Ella's fortitude was not equal to behold this change unmoved, though Mrs. Vane could undergo it with firmness; and when she curtsied to her with all the respect she felt on her entering the pew, she was forced to turn away, and leaning on the side of the seat hide her face in her hands.

Ella had the delicate precaution to come to church without her carriage that day, that Mrs. Vane might not be reminded of her altered condition, by seeing her drive off in a splendid equipage, while she was forced to come and depart on foot. Perhaps unconsciously to herself, Mrs. Vane dreaded to witness this difference; for she certainly cast a sort of fearful look round when she reached the church porch, as if seeking and missing something; but Ella walked on, evidently expecting no carriage; and Mrs. Vane appeared, Mrs. Elmsley thought, to be relieved by this circum-

stance. As Mrs. Vane walked leaning on her maid, Ella, who was before, stopped till she came up to her, and offered her arm; which she accepted. Ella then began to expatiate on the beauties of the weather, and to praise the pleasantness of the walk to church. "To *you* it *may* be pleasant," replied Mrs. Vane with emphasis and feeling, "for you are young and *healthy*, and walking is the act of your choice, not your necessity; but *I* am lame, old, and infirm, and *must* walk; besides I have not been used to walking. However, 'Heaven tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' and I hope *in time* I shall be as reconciled to my fate as I *ought* to be." A person of less intuitive benevolence and delicacy than Ella would immediately have offered Mrs. Vane her carriage, and made a parade of assuring her it would always be at her service. But Ella not only felt that such an offer at that moment would look as if she fancied Mrs. Vane was what is called *spelling* for the proposal; she also knew that it would be pointing out most forcibly the superiority of her situation to Mrs. Vane's. She therefore remained silent; but she ventured gently to press the arm that was locked in hers, while a tear trickled down her cheek, and proved to the object of her interest that her silence did not proceed from insensibility. Little did Mrs. Vane suspect the design which Ella had on her, a design as yet too dangerous to be hazarded.

One Sunday, a violent shower detained Ella and Mrs. Vane in the church-porch, and the former was forced to send for her carriage, in which Mrs. Vane was prevailed on to take a seat. But, as the weather cleared up before they reached the manor house, Ella proposed extending their drive, and at length she asked Mrs. Vane to get out at her own house to see some improvements which she was making there. "It would be so obliging in you if you would alight!" said Ella.

"But I am not an obliging person," replied Mrs. Vane with a pensive smile; "however, I do not know how it is, there is no resisting you." So saying, she followed the delighted Ella into the hall, who, stepping back to let her precede her into a fine and spacious library, welcomed her in accents of grateful cordiality to her house. But little did either of them foresee the consequences of this visit. In coming down a few steps, which led from one apartment to another, Mrs. Vane slipped and fell, and with such violence, that her ancle, on which she fell, was so much injured as to make it impossible for her to stand or move. Ella immediately sent for the nearest assistance, being internally thankful that, as the accident was to happen, it had happened under her roof.

"This is a sad business, Miss Mordaunt, for *you* as well as for me," said Mrs. Vane, "for I doubt you will be tormented with me some time."

"Tormented!" replied Ella, "tormented! blest rather!—Oh! if you knew, if you could but understand, how I love to be with you!" Here she burst into tears, to the wonder of her gratified though suffering auditor.

"Young lady," said Mrs. Vane, after a pause, "you have quick sensibilities and easily-awakened feelings, for you have as yet known no deep and deeply-seated sorrow."

"No sorrow! What, not I!" replied Ella, eagerly.

"At least, no sorrows like to mine, Miss Mordaunt; and I attribute this violent emotion to pity for my misfortunes, and the generous wish to try to make me believe, lest my pride should be wounded, that while I am here receiving obligations I shall in reality be conferring them."

"You *will* oblige me by allowing me to wait on you, but my emotion had a cause you do not suspect;—however, in time you shall know it."

To be brief;—pain, confinement to one posture, and previous anxiety of mind, had a pernicious effect on the health of Mrs. Vane, and Ella had the mournful satisfaction of nursing the mother of the man whom she loved, in a long and dangerous illness. But she recovered, and recovered to gratify Ella by the assurance that she owed her life to her incessant care, and even filial assiduity.

Colonel Vane had now sailed near a twelvemonth. That he was safely arrived, was known by a letter from him to Colonel Rivers; but he added, that he was then going to join the army under the command of General Harris, and expected ere long to be in the heat of the war.—What painful intelligence to Ella! But she knew her letter of exculpation must have arrived, and she hoped that, if it reached him, for her sake he would do all he could to preserve his life, and not rush into battle careless, like a desperate man, of his safety and his life. But Mrs. Vane's hopes of amended fortune from his filial piety, and Ella's, of happiness from his restored confidence and his return to his country, were soon damped, if not destroyed for ever.

Intelligence was received of the capture of Seringapatam, and with it an account stating that the joy of the victory was damped by the loss and the danger of several gallant officers; that Lieutenant Colonel Vane, after displaying his usual bravery, had led on a small detachment too far from the main army, and was surrounded; that he had been seen to fall, but that his body had not yet been found; therefore he was only returned missing.

This glorious public, but this distressing private news was communicated to Mrs. Vane by her agent in London, and to Ella by her friend Mrs. Elmsley, who was commissioned by Mrs. Belmont to undertake in person a

task she could only herself perform by letter. Ella, therefore, went through the first agonies which such news occasioned, unseen by the unhappy mother, who had shut herself up to mourn in secret—to mourn, not over the loss of her son's society, for how could she miss or regret what she had never allowed herself to enjoy? but she mourned for that fantastic indulgence of morbid sensibility which had led her to reject the personal attentions of that son whom she was now doomed never to behold again; and, when she reflected on the pain which her conduct had occasioned to his affectionate heart, she endured the pangs of remorse, and felt in some measure the agonies of self-upbraiding. There is nothing, perhaps, which strips self-love so completely of its delusions, as the hand of misfortune. Hitherto, Mrs. Vane had fancied that the romantic love for her husband, which induced her to avoid the sight of her only child, because that child had occasioned his beloved father's death, was a proof of sensibility, which gratified her vanity by giving her a feeling of conscious superiority over sufferers more easily consoled. But now her conscience, awakened by the bitterness of regret, pointed out to her but too forcibly, that the only sure and virtuous proof of affection to her husband's memory which she could have given, would have been redoubled fondness for the son that husband loved, and eagerly risked his life to save; and, with the pious aspirations of a wounded but resigned heart, she mingled the more painful breathings of a humbled and a contrite one.

Ella, too, had requested to be left alone, and was endeavouring to compose herself sufficiently to obey the summons of Mrs. Vane to her presence whenever it should arrive. At length Mrs. Vane felt that the presence of Ella would be soothing to her, and she sent to request it, little suspecting that her kind, attentive nurse, her affectionate companion, was suffering still more acute anguish than her own, from the same overwhelming intelligence, except that hope, strangely but happily born of her despair, fondly whispered to her that as the body had not been found, Colonel Vane might still live, though wounded and a prisoner.

When Ella entered the room, Mrs. Vane was too much taken up with her own feelings to notice Ella's; and while she wept upon her shoulder, she was unconscious that the cheek which touched hers was cold and pale as that of death.

"O Ella!" cried Mrs. Vane, "now that he is lost to me for ever, I grieve that I allowed him to be such a stranger to me! I grieve that I did not conquer those feelings which now appear to me *criminal*, though once amiable and natural, which led me to drive him from my presence by my coldness and——" here she was interrupted most painfully; for Ella, sympathizing too strongly in the self-reproaches of Mrs. Vane, and shocked at the words "lost to me for ever," had sunk in alarming insensibility on her shoulder, and some hours elapsed before she could bear the presence of her surprised and agitated guest.

But Ella, to whom all concealment was painful, resolved from that moment, though at the risk of frustrating the dearest hope of her heart, to confide every secret of it to Mrs. Vane, and in the evening she begged that she would be so good as to come to her bedside; and while Mrs. Vane gazed with mournful anxiety upon her altered looks, Ella addressed her as follows: "It has long been, and is now, the *dearest* wish of my heart never to part from you again. I am in search of a proper companion to live with an orphan like myself, a being without near connexion of any kind; and could I have selected such a companion from the whole assembled world, my choice would have fallen on you."

Mrs. Vane, conscious how ill a broken-hearted woman, as she thought herself, was formed to undertake the task, spoke not, but shook her head in token of disapprobation.

"What, do you disapprove," cried Ella, "before you know who I am? When you shall know that, I shall not wonder if you should indeed refuse and reject me."

"Learn who you are! What mean you?" exclaimed Mrs. Vane, fearing that Ella was in a delirium.

"I am an innocent but most unfortunate woman. You must remember that—that an intended marriage with an heiress was communicated to you by——"

"I understand you; yes; a union I could not but approve, as it was, I was informed, with a lady of great fortune, beauty, and virtue."

"I was that lady!" exclaimed Ella with great effort.

"You!" cried Mrs. Vane; and seeing in Ella, at that moment, only a being afflicted like herself, for all her illness was now accounted for, "My poor afflicted one!" she faintly articulated, and clasped her with a mother's fondness, and a widow's sympathy, to her bosom. It was some minutes before either of them could renew the conversation; at last Mrs. Vane said, "But why should I be induced to reject you when I learnt that you were the beloved of my son?"

"Because but for a quarrel with me he would not have quitted England."

"Ha! I remember now that he hinted to me his disappointment in love had induced him to go and earn laurels in——." Here emotion silenced her, and rendered her auditor incapable of hearing more.

It is to be supposed that many such breaks occurred in the conversation between two persons so much interested in the melancholy event that had just occurred. At length Ella resumed her discourse thus: "I am, indeed

I am, self-judged, and impute to my petulant resentment of a charge that appeared to have foundation, his *original* departure from W——; the rest was the result of accident and misrepresentation. But though I knew that I *need* not have avowed my fault, as you could never have known it, I could not, as a woman of honour, allow you *unconsciously* to countenance, and take under your protection, the woman who had been the means of depriving you of such a treasure."

"A treasure! alas! to *me*, like the miser's gold to *him!*" exclaimed Mrs. Vane.

"Here," resumed Ella, pained by her emotion, and willing to interrupt it, "here is a narrative, which contains the whole of my sad and eventful though short history, and also, a secret as yet confided to you alone, the story of that child who is an inmate of this house. Read it, and judge me; and if you *can*, grant my most earnest prayer, and let my future days be passed in administering to the comforts of the mother, as I am forbidden to pass them in forming the happiness of the son." Ella then wished to try to rest, and Mrs. Vane retired to read the manuscript.

It began with her first seeing Colonel Vane, and a minute detail of all that passed between them, accompanied by the letters she had received from him, and the letter she had recently written to him; then followed what I shall give in detail, namely, a full elucidation of the mystery concerning her journey to Wales, and the infant under her protection. Ella wrote as follows:

"While I was in London I received a letter from my first cousin, the only child of my deceased uncle, whom I tenderly loved, conjuring me, if I wished to see her alive, to set off immediately for such a village, in such a county in Wales, but begging me to mention to no one where she was; conjuring me also to leave my servants at the entrance of the principality, and proceed one stage alone,—but that at the end of that stage I should be met and accompanied to her residence. This letter filled me with great alarm and uneasiness. Having ever considered concealment and mystery as the concomitants of guilt, I could scarcely prevail on myself to obey such mysterious and suspicious orders. But I had loved my uncle, and I loved his daughter; and as her manners were faultless in my opinion, and her character irreproachable, I concluded that her husband, a post captain and a very gallant officer, had gotten into some difficulties, and that he being forced to lie concealed, she was, very properly, the companion of his retirement. So little, alas! was I prepared for the shock which awaited me. Anxious for the life of my cousin, and alarmed at her danger, I set off immediately, and travelling day and night, soon found myself at the place where I was to dismiss my servants. I did so; and at the end of the first stage I was met by a sort of farmer's servant in a one-horse chaise, who in scarcely intelligible English told me he was come to conduct me to Mrs.—— naming the name my cousin had assumed, and giving me a short note from her not worth copying. After travelling about a mile over precipices, and winding round valleys shut closely in by the most threatening rocks I ever beheld, we reached a sort of cottage, adjoining a farm-house, at the door of which I saw, not, as I hoped, Captain Montgomerie anxiously awaiting my arrival, but a lady, whom I recognised as having been governess to my cousin, and who was, I thought, married and settled in Jersey. I had no time to ask questions, before I found myself by the bedside of the nearly dying Lucy, who received me with tears and blessings for my compliance with her request, and also with an expression of embarrassment and emotion, for which I found it impossible to account. That she had something lying heavily on her mind I soon discovered; and when I found that Captain Montgomerie was at sea, though expected very soon, and heard Lucy say she hoped she should be dead before he arrived,—strange, miserable suspicions took possession of my mind, and I wished yet dreaded an explanation. It came only too soon. Having dismissed the Welch girl who waited on her, and begged Mrs. Benwell, her friend, to leave us alone, she desired me to sit down by her bed-side, and, if possible, listen to her tale with patience:—'Yet how can I expect it?' she continued, 'how can I expect that purity like yours can bear to listen to a tale of guilt like mine!' 'Guilt!' I exclaimed, shuddering as I spoke. 'Yes, Ella, guilt. How will you be surprised, as well as shocked to learn that she, whom you have always considered as a model for married women, and as correct as she was happy, has been an abandoned woman and an adulterous wife!' At these dreadful words I started with horror and indignation from my seat, and it was long before the agonies of the dying and repentant sinner, and my own consciousness that she was a sufferer, and perhaps a penitent, could quell the tumult of my feelings, and reconcile me to be, at my time of life, the unprotected attendant on such a death-bed, and conveyed to it under all the disadvantages of mystery and loneliness. Besides, I felt that this was no common depravity, as her husband was all tenderness and indulgence. At length she went on thus:—'Though my husband doted on me, and still dotes, unconscious of my unworthiness, I never really loved him, as I sufficiently evinced in those little quarrels which take place sometimes even in the best assorted unions, for the submissions were always on my husband's side, and never on mine. This was soon discovered by a *family friend*, that greatest of all dangers to the peace of a married couple; unless he be honourable and the wife well-principled; for he who is a

guest at all times, and welcome at all hours, must sometimes come when some passing cloud has gathered on the brow of the husband or the wife, and the latter contrasts with the angry frowns of her husband, the unruffled brow and complacent smile and constant attention of the visiter and friend; and if left alone with the latter, how easily may an artful man win from a weak woman a detail of the causes of her husband's ill humour, and complaints of his unkindness, while he in reply wonders how any man can have the heart to afflict such excellence! Alas! it was thus that I was seduced; and I declare with my dying voice, that I believe *any* woman who can so far forget her duty as to complain of her husband, and to a *man* too, is *lost* unless she happens to have to deal with a man of principle and honour.' [You will conclude, my dear madam, that Mrs. Montgomerie did not go on thus with a connected discourse; but that I have, for the sake of brevity, thus joined together the sentiments I drew from her by my questions and involuntary expressions of wonder at her guilt.]

"'Our intrigue remained not only undiscovered but unsuspected,—for my manners, as you know, were very guarded; and though I had as it were *two* manners, still the fear of discovery put us both sufficiently on our guard, and when my husband was at sea we were never seen together. But long before our intercourse ended, I found that my lover had lost all regard for me, and wished to pique me into complete dismissal of him, while I had the misery of discovering at the same time that I was likely to become a mother, and infamy in all its terrors stared me in the face. However, as my husband was not to return for several months, though he had been absent six, I hoped to be able to conceal my situation and elude discovery. Therefore, when I found longer concealment impossible, I wrote to my friend, Mrs. Benwell, informing her of my distress, and she came over to me immediately. Soon after, on pretence of her being in ill health and requiring goat's whey, we went into Wales; and when my term drew near we retired to this sequestered spot, where, attended by a female only, I became the mother of a daughter, the image of you, Ella, especially in the eyes, and you, you know, are reckoned excessively like me.—Would that I had resembled you also in mind! But if I can prevail on you to take charge of my poor orphan, the child of shame, my little Ella (for I have named her after you) may resemble you in virtue, though her poor mother did not—and to you circumstances imperiously command me to bequeath her. You are rich, and can provide for her; you are humane, and will protect her.'—Here Mrs. Montgomerie was too exhausted to proceed, and left me at leisure to reflect, and to contemplate the unexpected embarrassment and pernicious anxiety to which she had exposed me. Alas! in what misery does not one frail woman involve all who are connected with her! A depraved man may be shaken off from the family he disgraces; but a depraved woman, dependent and weak from her nature and her sex, must still cling to those ties on which she is unworthy to depend; and wherever she does so, she leaves, like the snail on the fruit, a slime that marks her presence and her nature.—I was instantly aware of the bad consequences to me of a charge of this nature, unless allowed to disclose the name of the parents of the child; and I felt indignation and disgust at the cold selfishness of this unhappy woman, which led her, seemingly without remorse or consideration for me, to burthen me in a manner so injurious, in all probability, to my reputation and my prospects in life;—and I had almost indignantly resolved to refuse her request, when beholding death in her face, every other feeling subsided into that of affectionate pity; and taking her hand, with more tenderness than I thought I could ever feel towards her again, I asked her what had reduced her to her present state.—'You know,' she meekly replied, 'that consumptive symptoms attended my last lying-in; and waiting on this like a sort of retributive justice, they have proved too much for a constitution already subdued by the corrosive anguish of remorse.'

"'Remorse!' I exclaimed, 'and have you, then, my poor Lucy, been so severe a sufferer, and so sincere a penitent?'

"'I *am* a penitent,' she replied; 'but I am unable to give the strongest proof of my penitence; I cannot, will not, confess my crimes to my deceived and therefore happy husband. I cannot bear that he should endure the agony of knowing that the woman whom he adored, deceived and dishonoured him.'

"'But,' answered I, 'if he knows your guilt, he will not lament you as he will otherwise do,—therefore, your confession would spare him many a pang.'

"'It is not true,' she replied with great quickness and animation. 'One of the greatest of all pangs is the certainty of the unworthiness of the object we adore; and this is an agony I wish to spare my poor, confiding and betrayed husband, in gratitude for his long tried affection.'

"Perhaps she was right, as one considering the peace of another,—though wrong, as a sinner seeking her own good; but on this head all that I urged was urged alas! in vain.

"But to be as brief as possible;—at length, though perfectly aware of the dangers and difficulties it would involve me in, I made her a solemn promise to undertake the charge of her child. I also promised to conceal her guilt, and never let the name of the infant's mother be known, except for some *very particular purpose*, and to take every possible precaution to prevent Captain Montgomerie's having the slightest suspicion of the affair.

"That night, quieted in mind by my promise to be a mother to the little Ella, and with every sentiment of penitence and resignation, she breathed her last in my arms.

"I must own to you that her death was a great relief to my mind, by taking away a relation whose existence was a dishonour to me —and that it was some days before I could look at the offspring of guilt with affection enough to reconcile me to the task I had undertaken. But time and reflection have taught me tenderer feelings towards her, and even to rejoice that I may be able to train up in the paths of virtue, a being otherwise liable to tread in those of vice.

"As soon as the funeral was over, it was settled that I should return to Bower Wood and procure a nurse and place of abode for the child, then three months old, to which place Mrs. Benwell was to remove her, as that lady, who was anxiously expected back by her husband, could not herself take the child even for a short time, lest questions relative to it should be asked, and she be forced to confess all. But by placing it at three miles' distance from my own house, I hoped to escape all observation; and had I gone to see it in the middle of the day, and in my own carriage, all would have been well; but my consciousness made me steal to the cottage at undue hours, and alone, and thence arose the appearance of guilt which has occasioned so much misery.

"As soon as all was settled, and I, as I journeyed towards home, was left to the undisturbed reflections of my own mind, I foresaw with indescribable anguish the whole of the trials to which this mysterious event would expose me, if Colonel Vane became my declared lover.—True, I was at liberty to confide in him, according to my own stipulation for leave under *particular circumstances* to disclose the secret. But knowing as I did his distrustful disposition, and the severity of his opinions with regard to women, his jealousy of their intimate associations with each other, and his conviction of the certain influence of example, particularly among near relations, I felt that it would be long, very long, before I should have resolution, even if I had opportunity, to tell him that my first cousin, the play-fellow of my childhood and the frequent companion of my youth, was a depraved woman and a faithless wife, — faithless too, to one of the best of husbands.—I knew very well that he would be jealous and suspicious of such an intimacy and such an example, and that I should have great difficulty in persuading him that neither Mrs. Montgomerie's manners, conduct nor conversation exhibited, *to me at least*, aught but the most perfect purity and correctness; and I could not but fear that, by performing an act of pity and humanity, I should in all probability tarnish my own fair fame in the eyes of the only man of whose unqualified approbation I was decidedly ambitious. Still, however correctly I judged of Colonel Vane, I own with shame and contrition, that had I been as explicit with him as I ought to have been as soon as he declared himself my lover, much if not all of the wretchedness we have both experienced would have been avoided; and I shall regret to the last hour of my existence that weak and unworthy fear of consequences, that terror of awakening in him suspicions injurious to my character, which induced me to persevere in a concealment which, though the result of virtue in the *first* instance, when persevered in to a betrothed lover immediately became a species of guilt; and I felt that the misery I have endured from his suspicions of my depravity, has been a sort of retributive justice.

"But should he ever return, (and something whispers me that he will return,) and when I shall present to him as my guest, and the object of my fondest care, the mother whom I know he has always tenderly loved, I shall obtain a noble revenge over the doubts that degraded both him and me, and triumph I hope over every remaining prejudice. — O dearest madam! crush not these soothing hopes, but let me be to you as a daughter in every thing but the name!

ELLA MORDAUNT."

"The above was written, as you will perceive, before the dreadful news reached us. But I have remembered there is *still a hope*, or I could not have had the heart to write these few words."

While Mrs. Vane was reading this narrative, a feeling of pity and respect amounting to enthusiastic reverence was excited in her towards the young and interesting heroine, so deserving, yet so injured; so formed for happiness, yet suddenly plunged in what she considered irremediable misery; for could Ella ever recover the blow? Never; for she gave to her *her* own feelings; and she could not prove her respect more. "Noble-minded girl!" she exclaimed, "to take on herself the blame of having deprived me of my son, though at the risk of driving me from her! Leave thee, thou dear and generous and ill-treated being! Never, never. Thy reputation has suffered in some measure through the means of the son, be it the mother's care and pride to restore it by her countenance to its original brightness! for who can dare to say, that the mother of Colonel Vane and the faithful widow of his father would be the companion of aught but purity and virtue?"

Her meeting with Ella next day was a most affecting one; but it healed in some measure the sorrows of both. Ella was contented to receive Mrs. Vane as her companion on her own terms; that is, on her paying for the board of herself and servant.

Ella was called away from this interesting meeting to a *new trial;* that of receiving Cap-

tain Montgomerie, to whom she had written, stating that his wife was taken ill while travelling in Wales with Mrs. Benwell, and that she had hastened to her only just time enough, as the decline was very rapid, to receive her dying breath, and be entrusted with her tender wishes for his health and happiness, and her blessing for the years of indulgent affection in which she had lived with him; commending at the same time her daughter (then at school) to his care and love. Captain Montgomerie had received this letter some months before the state of his spirits would allow him to answer it; and he had been on shore some days before he had resolution to set off for Bower Wood to visit Ella, as he had not learnt her change of abode.

At W—— he not only learnt that, but heard such hints respecting its cause, and concerning Ella, that he thought it his duty, as a friend and relation by marriage, to tell her what was said, and offer his advice.

It was with excessive perturbation that Ella went down to an interview with this much injured, but deceived, confiding husband; and Captain Montgomerie was equally agitated. "O, Ella! kind and true friend," said he at last; "so you attended my suffering angel in her last moments? Would I had been there! would I had been there, to ask her pardon for all my faults towards her!"

"Faults, Montgomerie? Why, you were the best of husbands! You were only too good to her; you spoiled her."

"Do you think so? No; she was too perfect to be spoiled; I could not do too much for such an angel." Then he gave way to another burst of sorrow; while Ella could scarcely bear to witness such proofs of a tenderness so little deserved by the object of it.

"But tell me, Ella, do you really think I did my duty by her? I thought so while she was alive, but now she is dead I daily reproach myself."

"That is very natural and a very common feeling, my dear friend, though in your case a most irrational one; you were, on *my honour*, in my opinion, a model for husbands."

"She was for *wives*, Ella. Now tell me, do you think you ever saw a more admirable woman?"

"Dear Montgomerie!" replied Ella, willing to avoid a direct reply, "I will not suffer you to go on thus. By dwelling thus on the charms of her whom you have lost, you only increase the misery you ought to struggle to overcome."

"Well, that's right," said he, deeply sighing; "and now to show my gratitude to you for your kindness to my dying saint.—Tell me," cried he, suddenly grasping her arm, "do you not think she is now a saint in heaven?"

"My belief in the mercy of the Deity is unbounded," replied Ella solemnly.

"His mercy?" replied Montgomerie, "I was speaking of his *justice*; and from that she had little to fear."

"Captain Montgomerie," replied Ella with a pale cheek and faltering voice, "these are awful, fearful subjects, and I like not to discuss them, assured that the very best of us, in the presence of Him to whom you allude, must stand appalled." And Montgomerie, a little piqued at her not approving of his beatification of his adored Lucy, went on with what he was going to say.—"Well, well, then to talk of something else—and as I was going to say, in return for your kindness to my lost treasure, I will tell you a bit of my mind relative to yourself. I find at W——, that you have been playing the fool, cousin Ella."

"Playing the fool, Captain Montgomerie! What mean you?"

"Why I mean that you have been setting all the gossips talking about you!"

"How!"

"Oh, you know how—and to be sure, though an excellent creature, you always were too apt to set appearances at defiance. You know my poor Lucy used to preach to you sometimes; she used to tell you your manner was too free; her *own* you know was perfect."

"Grant me patience, Heaven!" cried Ella rising and walking up and down the room—"Captain Montgomerie, I cannot bear these allusions to my cousin—they distress me beyond endurance."

"Do they? Kind, feeling girl! Well, I will obey you if I can—but as I was saying—I heard something about a child, a vague hint concerning a child that dropped from the clouds, and lo! was under your protection. Now, who but a romantic miss like you, who, conscious of her innocence forsooth, cares not what the world says, would undertake the charge of a mysterious child? for you don't suppose I think it your child, Ella—No, I would blow any man's brains out who said it was. But, how pale you look! I protest, if I don't believe you are going to faint!"

"I am rather sick," said Ella faintly; "but open the window, and I shall be better soon." He did so; and the tortured Ella recovered.

"And this is all you learnt, is it?" said she.

"All! and enough too; but I hope to know more, and prevail on you to tell me whose the child is, and not to persist in keeping a secret so prejudicial to yourself."

"Never. Besides, it has done me all the harm it can now do me," said Ella bursting into tears.

"I am sorry to distress you, Ella; but it is for your good; and I tell you honestly, you *must*, if you value your reputation, let it be known whose the child is; for though I would fight any man who said it was yours, I must own it is a suspicious circumstance; and I am

sure if my prudent, delicate Lucy were alive she would say the same."

"She would do no such thing," replied Ella indignantly; "she would bid me keep the secret so entrusted to me, at the hazard of every danger to myself."

"How little you knew her, Ella—why she had not an atom of romance in *her* composition! The plain, sober, straight-forward duties of life were all she cared for; and——." Here Ella absolutely ran out of the room, but soon returned, after a violent effort, to her astonished auditor. "Forgive me," said she, "but since Lucy's death-scene, and the probable loss of one very dear to me, my nerves have been much shattered."

"Poor thing!" he replied, affectionately kissing her hand, "I can feel for you only too well—but about this child, Ella——"

Here she interrupted him, and said firmly, "Captain Montgomerie, my own sense of right has hitherto always been my rule of action, and ever shall be; and I must desire you to drop this subject." At this moment the nurse, supposing Ella was alone, came into the room with the infant in her arms. In an instant the terrified Ella ran to the door to send her back; but Montgomerie reached it before her, and vowed he would have a look at the little brat, and see if he could find out whose it was by the likeness. This speech rendered Ella desperate, and wildly struggling with Montgomerie, she desired the nurse to take the child away. However, though Ella had removed him from the door by her efforts, and the nurse had liberty to pass, he suddenly sprung forward and seized the woman; and the child's tell-tale eyes were about to be turned on him, when the infant, frightened by the noise, set up a scream, and began to cry in a manner so deforming to its face, and rendering its eyes so completely irrecognisable, that Ella was easy; and Captain Montgomerie, holding his ears, was glad to let it depart instantly.

"I will bid you farewell, now, Ella," said he coldly.—"Upon my soul, you are an inexplicable girl! But I will see you again before I sail, and then I hope you will hear reason." And Ella had the misery of seeing that he went away *suspecting* that the town of W—— had more ground than he knew of for their suspicions.

"Oh! my dear madam!" said Ella to Mrs. Vane, "I have gone through such a trial! but I came off victorious." And the praises of Mrs. Vane were indeed requisite to keep up her drooping fortitude.

Ella was soon called upon to endure a trial of a different nature, and, as she smilingly told Mrs. Vane, to emulate her magnanimity in suffering,—a suffering which, for her sake, she regretted much more than for her own.

The father of Ella came to the estates which she enjoyed on the death of a first cousin of the name of Mordaunt, his own name being Aubrey; and on coming to them he was forced, as his cousin had been before him, to take the arms, and bear the name of Mordaunt.

Mr. Mordaunt had had one son, a most profligate young man, whose debts of honour and other debts he had paid till he could pay no longer; on which the infatuated young man broke open his father's bureau, and, having taken thence bills to a considerable amount, he married a woman of the town, and set sail for the East Indies. As soon as he arrived there he went up the country; and being resolved never to hold intercourse with his father, and, eager to be revenged on him for refusing to pay his debts, he spread a story of his death, knowing that his father's first wish was to have an heir; and hoping, should he marry a second wife and have children, to return some day or other, and blight the prospects of the supposed heir by proving himself alive. His scheme succeeded only in part; for his father, though he believed him dead, did not marry again, and the fortune descended to Ella. The heir, meanwhile, having lost his first wife, married a woman of colour, who brought him an immense fortune; and to this woman he was so much attached, that, as she vowed she would never quit India, he resigned his intentions of claiming his birthright, and let the fortune go, on his father's decease, to the heir at law. But when his second wife died, and he sought to lose the anguish her loss occasioned him in a renewal of his gaming habits, he soon lost all the fortune she had brought him; and when his only child lamented in his hearing that his prospects in life were now entirely blighted, he felt it an act of duty and justice to him to assert his claims to the Mordaunt fortune, and prove beyond dispute that Richard Aubrey, the only son and lawful heir of Mr. Mordaunt, of Bower Wood, was alive, and had a son to succeed him. Accordingly, he and his son sailed for England, and after he had consulted with his lawyers, Ella's solicitor received the necessary notice. Of Mr. Aubrey's identity there could be no doubt; many persons recognised him as soon as they saw him; amongst the rest, Ella herself, who, when a child, remembered having conceived a great terror against him because he had, while on a visit to her parents, seated her on his lap and rubbed her cheek with his beard. The case was, therefore, too plain to admit of any doubt, and Ella quietly resigned all title to the Mordaunt estates, and took the name of Aubrey, refusing to accept any donation from a man whom she could not esteem, preferring to live on the trifling sum bequeathed to her by Mrs. Anne Mordaunt! The young heir of Bower Wood, indeed, who had become enamoured of Ella's beauty, spite of her evident dejection, would, with his father's approbation, too, have made her his wife; but this offer she peremp-

torily declined, and the father and son were both too angry to trouble her with further attentions.

Mrs. Vane and Ella, now more alike in trials, more sisters in misfortune than before, had therefore a new home to seek. Ella could with great economy have lived herself on the income she possessed; but even united to Mrs. Vane's it was not enough to procure to that now constant invalid the comforts and aids she wanted. Therefore Ella resolved to increase her income, and consequently prevent any privations to her companion, by taking pupils; and as the unwelcome and overpowering intelligence had now arrived that Colonel Vane's body, though stripped and mutilated, had been found, recognised, and buried with due honours, all the hope was for ever lost which had almost unconsciously supported the spirits of Ella, and she felt that without constant and difficult occupation she should perhaps sink under the pressure of affliction. Besides, she thought that she could educate her orphan charge better with others than alone, and she proceeded accordingly as soon as she had prevailed on Mrs. Vane to consent to her plans, which she did as soon as Colonel Vane's death was declared to be undoubted, and the heir at law had taken possession of his property, which consisted entirely in entailed estates.

Ella resolved, for the sake of income, to take six pupils from the age of thirteen to sixteen at a very considerable salary, and for the sake of usefulness she wished to add to them twelve children of four years old; because she thought that though she might improve the *manners* of girls of the former age, she could do little for their morals, as she believed that the foundation of character is laid in childhood, and can never be materially altered; but at the early age of four she thought that she might not only give her pupils good habits, but eradicate bad ones. And Mrs. Vane highly approved this plan; but she would probably have approved any plan which Ella proposed, as, being formed not only to love excellence but to adore it, she was convinced that all Ella did was "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;" for, like most persons who slowly and rarely love, Mrs. Vane when she did love did so even to enthusiasm. Meanwhile, such was the power of Mrs. Vane's countenance and protection to counteract the baneful effect of the slanders propagated against Ella, that she had in a short time the number of pupils which she desired, and the quondam heiress of Bower Wood became as celebrated at T——, near which city she now resided, for her successful manner of instructing youth, as she had been for her beauty, her graces, her taste, and her splendour, when she lived in the neighbourhood of W——.

Nearly three years had elapsed since the news of the taking of Seringapatam had reached England, and Ella had been two years a school-mistress, when a gentleman of good fortune and of splendid abilities, who was very high at the bar, ventured to avow to the exemplary instructress of youth the passion he had never dared to own to the heiress of Bower Wood. To virtue and talent he united great personal recommendations and most pleasing manners; and such was his respect for Ella's feelings, that it was to Mrs. Vane he first made known his desire to address her. At first the idea of such a proposal startled and distressed Mrs. Vane; but her good sense, and her generosity of nature, soon taught her that she must not even wish to stand in the way of Ella's forming so desirable a marriage, and that she ought to combat the attachment to the memory of her son, which might lead Ella to reject this advantageous proposal; while with a look and manner which conveyed to Mr. Allington a conviction that she spoke truth, she assured him that she earnestly wished him success, and would second his suit to the utmost of her power.

"Allow me, madam, to say, that if I am so fortunate as to succeed, my first request must be that *you* reside with us; on no other condition would I accept the hand of Miss Mordaunt, as one of her charms in my eyes is her devoted attachment to you." Mrs. Vane was gratified, but only offered him her thanks in return;—she was however pleased to think this generosity in Mr. Allington might be likely to recommend his suit to Ella.

Ella, though flattered by and grateful for the love of such a man, gave to his offers a firm though kind refusal; but at length overcome by his pleadings and those of Mrs. Vane, she promised to take a week to consider of his proposals, and examine her own heart before she made an absolute decision. At the end of that time Mr. Allington came according to appointment, and as soon as Ella entered the room Mrs. Vane knew by the placid and contented expression of her countenance what her decision would be. "I have now sir," said she, "in justice both to you and myself, taken a whole week to consider on the offer you have honoured me by making, and I can only say in the words of an old song which I could *once* sing,

'Gin living worth could win my heart,
You would not sigh in vain;
But in the silent grave 'tis laid——' "

Here emotion choked her utterance; but recovering herself, she added, "Yet that is not the truth neither; while I remain single, I may without a fault allow myself to dwell on the image of him whom I have lost—but were I a wife, I could not, ought not to do this; nay more,—and that is the true reason why I will not *attempt* to substitute your image for his, and try to return the love with which you

honour me,—strange, ridiculous and romantic as it may be, and though the heir at law has long since taken possession of his cousin's estates, being convinced of his death, there are times when I disbelieve it still, and when I lose myself in a delightful reverie of his return.—But if I marry I must give up this enjoyment, or rather the idea would cease to be an enjoyment; and believe me, I would rather have the pleasure of this ideal good, I would rather retain the power of having these soothing reveries, than resign them for aught which the rest of the world would consider as substantial benefits. I can say no more," continued Ella, "except to beg you to remember that no *living* object, one alone excepted, could rival *you*, or succeed where you have failed."

Affected, gratified, yet distressed, Mr. Allington silently pressed her hand, and departed.

"My child, child of my love and my adoption!" cried Mrs. Vane, when he was gone, "I cannot blame you, for I should have done the same." But after this burst of feeling was over, Mrs. Vane entered into herself, and recollected how wrong it was in her to countenance in Ella, by her implied approbation, an indulgence of hopeless tenderness which she was now well aware had been improper in herself; and with a faltering voice, but a firm and decided mind, she expostulated seriously with Ella, and endeavoured to convince her, that her resolution never to marry, and the grounds on which it was formed, were a dereliction from duty, inasmuch as they prevented her from filling those situations in life which she was so well calculated to fill with honour to herself and benefit to others.

"I should agree with you in opinion," replied Ella, "and act accordingly, were my feelings of faithful tenderness so morbid, as to make me lead a life of seclusion, uselessness, and misery. But it is not so; though I have not, nor ever shall have children of my own, my life is spent in endeavouring to benefit the children of others. Though I have no husband to claim from me the duties of affection, I have a suffering and sickly parent, for whom it is my pride and my pleasure also to perform all the little offices which her situation requires; and while that parent owns that I make her happy, who shall say that the indulgence of my hopeless tenderness interferes with my duties and what I owe to my fellow-creatures? Grudge me not then, dearest mother, as I must ever call you, the dreams that repay me in my moments of leisure for the privations I endure. True they are but dreams —yet they are to me welcome and soothing as the distant ray of his cottage lamp to the labourer when he returns to his home after the toil of the day is over."

"Enough, my child," replied Mrs. Vane, "and I will urge you on this subject no more."

About a month after the meeting with Mr. Allington and this conversation had taken place, Ella went to a bookseller's shop in the town of T——, which she had been in the habit of frequenting; and seeing the newspaper lying on the table, she was just taking it up, when the mistress of the shop ran to her, and snatching it from her, said, "The paper is engaged, you can't have it." Ella for a moment thought that her adversity had altered this woman's manner towards her, as she had known her in her prosperity and had then treated her with due respect; she was therefore preparing to express her indignant surprise at this rudeness, when looking up, she saw her lip quivering with emotion, and her eyes filled with tears. Immediately a vague suspicion came across her mind;—she had, she was sure, no new calamity to hear;—perhaps then the paper contained joyful news;—and almost breathless with emotion she said, "I know you had a reason for snatching that paper so rudely from me."

"God bless you! that I had."

"But give it me; there can be no bad news for me to hear *now*; and if, as you have seen, I can support misfortune, do you think I cannot support happiness, if such be really in store for me?"

"I don't know what to do," replied the good woman. "I saw when you came in that you had not heard the news, and I was afraid to let you see it all at once, as they say."

"Pray give me the paper," said Ella faintly, and going into the parlour behind the shop. The woman obeyed her, and Ella read as follows: "We have the happiness to inform our readers that a gentleman just returned from India saw and spoke to, on the coast of Malabar, the gallant Colonel Vane so long supposed dead."

"I am very faint," said Ella, and for some minutes she laid her face on the kind woman's shoulder; "I am better now," said she, "but I will go home; I do not want to read any more; I know he is alive, and that's enough." At this moment, while the wildness of her look and the odd sound of her voice alarmed her humble friend for her reason, a violent burst of tears relieved her, and restored her to herself. She now took up the paper again, and saw that Colonel Vane had been in prison, ay, in the prisons of the inquisition at Goa; that he had suffered much from his wounds, and was scarcely recognisable. "But he is alive again!" exclaimed Ella; then continuing to read, she found he was well enough to sail for England, and was probably already embarked.

"Already embarked! and he is coming! and we shall see him again!" cried Ella. Then another flood of tears came to her relief, and in an hour's time she was able to compose herself sufficiently to return home to communicate the glad tidings which she had heard. But how should she set about it? There was the difficulty; and while wondering what to do,

she found herself in the presence of Mrs. Vane, who seeing her coming, and noticing her agitated air, came out to meet her. "What ails you, my child?" cried she; "you look I know not how."

"Do I?" she replied with a sort of vacant smile; then looking up in Mrs. Vane's face, and throwing herself on her neck, she burst into a violent convulsive laugh.

"Gracious Heaven! exclaimed Mrs. Vane, "O let me not have to fear for the mind of this beloved being! Ella, Ella, have mercy upon me, and let me not have the agony of seeing you thus."

Ella was conscious, though in this high state of nervous irritation; and making a great effort she faltered out, "He is alive! he is well, he is coming to England."

"But is this true? can it be? who says so? is it in the papers, and in wide letters?"

"It is; I saw it myself this moment." And Mrs. Vane fell on her knees, and joining her hands in prayer, murmured out, "Father of mercies! I thank thee; but not for my sake do I rejoice, I did not deserve this blessing."

A chaise and four now drove up to the door, and occasioned them surprise and perturbation. It could not be, they knew, the object of their solicitude; and lo! two strangers, a lady and a gentleman, alighted; on which the servant came in, saying that Colonel and Mrs. Rivers begged to see Mrs. Vane. Their errand who could doubt? their motives who could mistake? They were admitted; and as soon as they saw by the emotion visible on the faces of both ladies that the good news was known, they caught the contagious emotion, and the man and the soldier was not ashamed to join his tears to theirs.

"Mrs. Vane," said Colonel Rivers, "I dared not come nearer you, nor that lady, while I thought that Vane had perished for his humanity to me, and my poor Sophia here could hardly value the life she had purchased at so dear a rate. But now that we are both wild with joy at the news of his being still in existence and on his way to England, we ventured to show our faces to you; and here we are, and though strangers we hope to be considered as friends."

"I must give my children a holiday to-day," said Ella; and she felt an undescribable emotion while she sent the glad notice by the lisping tongue of the little Ella.

The Riverses stayed with them till the moon rose, and then left them, promising to return when Colonel Vane should arrive! what sounds! what unexpected sounds! and Ella kept repeating them till she retired to rest to muse over the blessed hope,

"To hear that voice she feared to hear no more!"

The next day she would fain have given another holiday; but Mrs. Vane wisely remarked, that as occupation is a salutary medicine for sorrow, so is it for joy, and serves to keep the spirits in wholesome bounds. Therefore Ella kept school as usual, and to prevent her having any unnecessary emotion, Mrs. Vane sent the little Ella to a friend's house for a few days, as the sight of her evidently agitated Ella's spirits.

Bigotry and superstition have destroyed so many lives, and will, I fear, destroy so many more, that one is pleased to find them preserving one life; and that so valuable a life as Colonel Vane's.

Mr. Vane and his wife had both been catholics, but had abjured that church before they were united. Their daughter, however, having been educated secretly in that communion by a governess, was allowed by her parents to worship as her convictions directed. On her deathbed she tied with her own hand round Colonel Vane's neck a small gold crucifix, conjuring him to keep and wear it always for her sake. Colonel Vane, who tenderly loved her, obeyed her parting desire, and continually wore what she considered as holy, and hoped, perhaps, would in time influence the wearer, for the head of the Saviour opened and contained a *holy relic*. When Colonel Vane was cut down before Seringapatam, he struggled to recover his feet spite of the terrible sabre wound on his head, but did not succeed, and he fell over a mound of earth into an excavation beside it. Here he remained unseen while the field was searched; but in the dead of night a Portuguese missionary and one of the most fanatical of his tribe, sallied forth from the pious hope of administering spiritual aid to some of the dying who might yet be sensible of the sacred rite, and his foot happening to stumble over the mound of earth, he fell over it, and on the body of Colonel Vane. He immediately conjectured that he had fallen on a corpse; but hearing a groan, he knew his conjectures to be false; and stooping to examine the wounded man, who was he saw by his dress an English officer of rank, he beheld glittering on his bosom the holy cross, which spoke him, as he imagined, a secret worshipper according to the rites of his own holy religion; therefore, to preserve the life of a believer, and a believer who was in circumstances to make proselytes, became an act of the most positive duty. He accordingly tried to staunch the wound on the head; and having to a degree succeeded, he contrived to carry and to drag the insensible sufferer to a hut in which he himself had passed the night; and as he was to sail the next day for Goa, he hired a conveyance for his patient to the coast, whom he dressed in the garb of an ecclesiastic; and having reached the shore he took him with him on board as a brother priest who had been wounded by a sudden battle beneath the walls of the city. In the meanwhile Colonel Vane, still insensible, and not likely then, if ever, to recover his recollection, was incapa-

ble of contradicting his statement. At length they reached Goa, and the priest conveyed his patient to his home, where by judicious treatment he at length recovered his senses, and found himself to his utter surprise in a place and with a person whom he had no knowledge of. As soon as the priest saw him move and heard him speak, he crossed himself and held up the crucifix before Colonel Vane; but Colonel Vane, who was not used to such ceremonies, took no notice of what he said or did, but begged to know, in English, where he was, and what had happened to him. The missionary replied in Portuguese, which Colonel Vane understood sufficiently to learn that he was in Goa, and brought thither by the priest whose care had saved his life.

"But why did you bring me hither?" asked Colonel Vane.

"That you might inhabit a holy city, where the true faith is established, and, leaving heretics awhile, worship with your true brethren."

Amazement for a time suspended the reply of Colonel Vane; at length he answered, "Surely you do not know that you are speaking to an English officer?"

"To be sure I do; but you may trust me; I will not betray you; I know your secret; I know you are in your heart a good catholic, as this holy cross, containing this holy relic, worn next your bosom, sufficiently testifies, and therefore I laboured to save your life; that you might live to convert others."

Colonel Vane, ill as he was, could scarcely help smiling at this mistake, though he felt that he owed his life to it; but he was too honourable, whatever might be the risk to himself, to let his preserver remain deceived any longer; he therefore assured him that, though no catholic, he was a Christian, and he could not have preserved a man who would be more willing to acknowledge and to prove his sense of the obligation.

"No catholic!" replied the priest, "then why do you wear this sacred symbol?"

"I had a catholic sister, who on her deathbed tied it round my neck, and I have worn and loved it for her sake."

I will abridge the narrative as much as possible, and therefore pass over the priest's attempts to convert Colonel Vane, which would he thought be of such use to the cause of catholicism, by threats, by coaxing, by hard usage, and by kindness—refusing to let him have the means of writing to the commander-in-chief, who would he knew suppose him dead and report him as such to England; till at last, willing to keep the cross, which Colonel Vane declared he never would give him, though he would when he reached England or any British dominions remit him a hundred times its value, the fanatic, on his uttering some violent philippic against the Inquisition and its odious jurisdiction, informed against him; and though scarcely able to move, he was soon lodged in one of the prisons of that formidable power at Goa. There he soon fell ill of a violent fever, after he had suffered eight months of illness, weakness, and anxiety, before he entered its hated walls; and for many months he was at times deprived of his reason, which he at length recovered to find himself still in his sad and lonely prison, and to believe that a disorder on the lungs would soon terminate his existence. In this deplorable state he prevailed on the jailer to give him pen, ink, and paper, and to carry a letter from him to the chief inquisitor, stating who he was, and begging that a letter from him might be forwarded to General Harris. To this letter he received no answer for many weeks. At length he was told that a letter had been despatched to General Harris, who had written back word that the person who called himself Colonel Vane must be an impostor, for that that lamented officer's body had been found, and interred with military honours. This overwhelming intelligence upset the as yet weak intellect of the sufferer; for, as he saw no way of convincing any one that he was alive, he knew not how to liberate himself from the prison. He was, besides, threatened with being called before its horrid tribunal, and it is no wonder therefore that he relapsed into fever and delirium.

When he again recovered, the jailor was so moved with his sufferings, that he was prevailed upon to procure him the means of sending a letter *himself* to the army, to be given into the general's own hand. Accordingly a swift-footed Indian was procured, and departed on his voyage and his journey. The letter succeeded; Colonel Vane's handwriting was known, a soldier was sent to identify his person, and in due time he was claimed by the British resident at Goa. But he was so weak, and so likely in his opinion to die, that he begged neither General Harris, nor the resident to whose house he was now removed, would transmit to England an account of his being alive, as he felt that it was better for those who loved him to suppose him dead at his post, than to fancy him lingering in a painful illness which might be followed by a lingering death. And it was long, very long, and the *third year* of his absence from England had commenced, ere he thought himself sufficiently sure of life to allow his escape to be made known in England; and having borrowed the money necessary for his passage and subsistence, he sailed by the first ship that went after the vessel which contained the gentleman who had seen and spoken with him.

At length Colonel Vane reached England, whence he had received no letters since he left it. The ship was lost that conveyed Ella's letter. And the letters were lost which told of his mother's change of fortune. He drove immediately to what he imagined the

house of his banker; but strangers inhabited it; and he could only learn from one of the new firm that Messrs.—— had failed, and not paid half a crown in the pound. He also added that Mrs. Vane lived at such a place, and that she and a Miss Aubrey kept school together. Colonel Vane then desired the post-boy to drive him to the inn directly, where he ordered a chaise and four horses, resolving to proceed with all possible expedition to his mother's abode. "She shall not keep school two days longer, I am resolved," said he, "and Miss Aubrey shall have it all to herself." While waiting to pay the ostler, and as the horses were ready to start, Captain Clinton, only just arrived himself from Guernsey, appeared at the door of the chaise, having only that moment heard the news of Colonel Vane's restoration from the grave. But he was so altered that Clinton did not know him when he first spoke, and when he did, he could hardly articulate the joy he felt at seeing him. "I am now setting off for T——," said Colonel Vane; then, with some confusion, he added, "pray, Miss Mordaunt——"

"Is," interrupted Clinton, "Miss Mordaunt no longer, as you have, I suppose, heard before this time.—Well, you are a lucky fellow, Vane. But go; let me not detain you; I will see you soon." And Colonel Vane's post-boy drove off, while he remained wretched, unquiet, suspicious, and surprised. Miss Mordaunt was Miss Mordaunt no longer; she was married then, and yet he was styled a lucky fellow! No doubt, therefore, she had turned out ill; and his misgivings were just. No wonder; for was she not the friend of Lady Harriet Bentham? And these reflections very much damped the joy which he felt at the idea of seeing his mother, and rescuing her from her present situation. He had the precaution not to drive to the door, lest he should overset Mrs. Vane by coming abruptly; but he went up to it on foot, and gave a gentle knock;—he then put a little note in the hand of the servant, and told her to give it to Mrs. Vane; it was to say that Colonel Vane was very near. Mrs. Vane was alone; for Ella was in the school. She read the note, and instantly recognised the handwriting. "Where's the gentleman!" she exclaimed; and in another moment she was folded in the arms of her son.

"My poor Edmund!" she exclaimed, almost hysterically, "how you are altered! I should not have known you, my child; but I am altered too,—and you shall find I can at last be a mother!"

This effusion of tenderness where he so little expected it, was a cordial indeed to the drooping spirits of Colonel Vane, and after some little time he said, "but who is the Miss Aubrey who lives with you?"

"An angel," she replied; "she has nursed me, waited on me, and made me the sharer of her fortune while she had fortune to bestow; and when, like me, she became deprived of all, 'of every stay save innocence and heaven,' she united her poverty to mine, and laboured cheerfully to procure comfort for *me*."

"Generous woman! how I shall admire her!"

"Nay, more;—you must love her, Vane; she is young, beautiful, and accomplished! and the only woman I ever thought worthy to be the wife of my son. Vane, you must marry her."

"Never; any thing else, dear madam, for indeed I have not a heart to bestow. Like you, your son can know no second love, and —but I beg you will allow me to drop the subject."

"At present I will," said Mrs. Vane, "but it must be resumed;—and now let me present you to Miss Aubrey." So saying, she led the way to the school-room, the door of which was open, and Ella sat with her back to it, busily employed in teaching a little girl her lesson. Mrs. Vane gave the children a sign not to notice their approach, and Colonel Vane heard the voice of Ella as she asked the child questions, and corrected its mistakes. "There never was but one voice like that," thought Colonel Vane, and his heart beat tumultuously;—but could it be? was it possible? But then the form too,—the dark and glossy hair, the back of the neck! Just then, Ella turned her head round, and, uttering a scream of joy and surprise, flew into the extended arms of Colonel Vane, who led or rather bore her into an adjoining apartment.

"How could you surprise me so, my dear madam?" said Ella, as she withdrew herself, blushing and trembling, from Colonel Vane's support.

"I had my reasons," replied Mrs. Vane.

"But how could you know me so instantly?" said Colonel Vane; "for I am so altered, that even Clinton hesitated to speak to me."

"I should have known you *any* where," replied Ella, tenderly and earnestly, blushing afterwards at her own vehemence.

If ever man was happy, it was, at this moment, Colonel Vane. Ella had not justified herself; yet he felt her to be so;—he found her the nurse, the friend, the supporter, the consolation, the idol, the pride of his mother; and though little inclined to vanity, he could not help flattering himself that it was a little for the son's sake that she had done so much for the mother. "But then he was supposed dead."—True,—and it was then love for *his memory* that had perpetuated her services to Mrs. Vane, and that was a purer, a sweeter consciousness still;—and for two days, every look, every word of Colonel Vane's convinced both his mother and Ella that he was about to request from her a renewal of that engagement which she, in a moment of anger, had dissolved. On the morning of the third day,

being alone with Ella, who had prevailed on Mrs. Vane to assist her in the execution of a scheme which she had planned, he was just about to open his heart to her, when the little Ella, just returned from her visit, bolted into the room, and, running up to Ella, jumped on her lap, calling her her dear, dear mamma! The sight of a ghost would have less appalled Colonel Vane; while Ella, who saw his consternation, said, "There, my dear, go and ask that gentleman how he does."

"How do you do, sir?" cried the obedient child, turning on him, Ella's *own blue eyes, and long eyelashes.* "How do you do, sir?" the child repeated, as Colonel Vane did not answer.

"How do you do, little dear, how do you do?" he answered at length in a hurried manner.

"Shall I kiss you?" she said, putting up her mouth to him; when Ella, seeing his almost ludicrous agony, told the child to go and speak to her *grandmamma.*

"Mamma! and *grandmamma*, and Ella's own eyes and eyelashes! Alas!" thought he, "I fancied all my suspicions vanished, all my fears removed! But suspicion *once* excited is like the heads of the Hydra, and cut them off ever so often they spring up again." However, he felt that the moment *was* arrived when he might and ought to interrogate Ella on the subject of this child; and as soon as she was gone, he seated himself by her, and begged her to explain the as yet inexplicable mystery which involved that child, and the circumstances relating to it. It was not possible for her to make the disclosure herself; and Ella, not without great emotion, replied, "Yes, Colonel Vane, it is now indeed time that every mystery should be cleared up to you, and every secret revealed; but as I cannot undertake the task, your mother *will.* Go to her, therefore, this moment," said she, bursting into tears, "and I conjure you ardently and solemnly to look upon that child with kindness, and not to execrate her unhappy mother!" Then, hastening from the room, and not at all aware of the equivocal sense of her words, she left Colonel Vane more bewildered, more wretched, more suspicious than before. —"Not quite to execrate the mother! Why who is the mother? Gracious God! can it indeed be *that*——Pity and forgive, I may do; but as to marriage—." He then went in search of his mother! and as he entered her apartment, he saw Ella with her handkerchief at her eyes go out at an opposite door. "Whence but from one distracting cause," thought Colonel Vane, "can this strong emotion proceed?" and with a heart more oppressed than it had ever been, he took a chair, and begged his mother to disclose to him the mysterious secret.

"First, let me put a few questions to you," she replied. "You know what Miss Aubrey has been to me, Edmund,—friend, comforter, supporter, child;—therefore you must suppose that I wish her to find the reward of her many virtues in being the wife of my son, for whom she has preserved an unshaken attachment."

"And if," replied Colonel Vane, affected and pleased at this last assurance, "and if to her other virtues Miss Aubrey adds the indispensable virtue of chastity, that balm which can alone preserve the others from decay, I *will* marry her; for I love her passionately, and never, never can be happy without her, though, while I have a doubt of her honour, I never could be happy *with* her."

"What! could you not be prevailed on to forgive one deviation; a fault excused by youth and extenuating circumstances, and atoned for by a multitude of virtues and tears of incessant penitence?"

"Madam, madam, what do I hear? my mother pleading to her son to forgive in his intended wife a lapse from virtue? Penitence is a fine thing, to be sure; but I can't say but I admire much more those who have no need of penitence. But all this is trifling; to come to the point at once, who is that child?"

"She is the child of guilt and shame, and her poor mother's fondest hope—"

"Oh! this is too much to bear! Madam, if Miss Aubrey, in early youth, contracted an imprudent or even *disgraceful* marriage, and that child be the fruit of it, I will forgive and marry her; but never, never, though my health, broken as it is, should *sink* under the necessity of an eternal renunciation of her; never will I marry a woman, whose virtue having been once forfeited, I shall always think liable to be forfeited again, and who also, in my eyes, has lost the brightest and most necessary charm of woman!"

"And this is your fixed, your final resolution? Then, poor Miss Aubrey!" exclaimed Mrs. Vane ironically! for she knew how *happy* this *delicate* and wise decision in her eyes would render Ella, who wished her lover, when put to the trial, should love her better than any thing but honour and virtue. Colonel Vane, however, mistook his mother's words, and indeed she wished him to do so, knowing that in proportion to his previous despair would be his joy on being undeceived. "Here, Edmund!" she continued, "here is the narrative which you require," giving him the manuscript in form of a letter which Ella had addressed to her, "and read it, read it here *in my presence.* The first part it is unnecessary for you to read now, as it contains what you know already. You had therefore better begin at 'When I was in London I received a letter—'"

Colonel Vane, though wishing to read the manuscript alone, consented to his mother's wishes, and also began where she directed him. It was with triumph of the most de-

lightful nature, that Mrs. Vane read on the expressive countenance of her son the gradual revival of his hopes and confidence in Ella, as he advanced in the narrative; while, forgetting she was present, he gave way in sudden exclamations to his feelings as they rose, and he never laid the manuscript down till he had read to the end of Mrs. Montgomerie's dying wishes and request to Ella. When he had read thus far, and remembered the scene at the cottage, he started from his seat, and was rushing out of the room, but his mother stopped him; "Where are you going?" said she.

"In search of *her*—of Ella—to humble myself before her—to fall at her feet."

"But you will not find her; aware of what your feelings would be, Ella went out; so sit down and read on." But unable any longer to bear a witness of his mingled and overpowering feelings, he left the room, and retired to finish the manuscript in his own apartment.

I shall not attempt to describe the meeting between him and Ella after her return from her walk; and the happiness of Ella and Colonel Vane was soon increased by a visit from Colonel Rivers and his amiable wife; and while the latter with tearful eyes contemplated the ravages which harsh treatment and illness had made in Colonel Vane, "all of which," she mournfully said, "he encountered for my sake," he could not help surveying her with very different feelings; and as he beheld her restored colour, and her now round and healthy form, he earnestly exclaimed, "To see you *at all*, but certainly to see you thus, is a very ample reward for all my sufferings."

"But you deserve a greater still," she replied, "and O that I, who was the cause of separating you so long, might have the happiness of witnessing your union for life! I assure you, Rivers and I came on purpose; and we will not depart till we have had a wedding."

Their wishes were granted; a draught of a marriage settlement, to be finished at a future day, was drawn up, and before Colonel Rivers and his wife departed they had the satisfaction of witnessing the union of Ella and Colonel Vane. Soon after, the man who had deprived Ella of her estates died, and his son fell a victim to intemperance. Consequently Ella, as he died without children, again became possessor of Bower Wood and Briardale. And as I cannot believe that any *woman*, or any *man*, who has been the object of *unjust calumny* and *slanderous accusation*, would not willingly be enabled to clear their fame from the least shadow of suspicion in this world, rather than wait till that awful hour "when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open," I must think that Ella and Colonel Vane both derived some satisfaction from the entire removal of every shade from her character, which took place soon after their marriage.

Captain Montgomerie, when stationed off Jersey, where his wife's friend Mrs. Benwell resided, had frequently visited that lady, and spite of himself, was struck with the confusion and embarrassment which she displayed when he was questioning her relative to Mrs. Montgomerie's last illness.—Still, though he feared he knew not what, he forbore further interrogatories, as if from the dread of learning by cross-examination something that might distress him. Not long after one of these conversations Mrs. Benwell was seized with a mortal malady; and on her death-bed she declared that she should not die easy without disburthening her mind of the load of deception towards Captain Montgomerie which weighed heavily upon it. Accordingly that gentleman was sent for, and she unfolded to his almost frenzied view, a scene of guilt of which he had not the remotest idea. He found that before she married him his wife had had a secret intrigue, of which Mrs. Benwell, then her governess, had been the confidante; and he also heard, that the child whom Ella had so eagerly sought to conceal from his sight, and had thereby called forth in him suspicions of her own guilt, was the innocent offspring of the guilt of that woman, whose conduct and manners he had been as it were reproaching her for not imitating! Now all her emotions were accounted for; now her generous silence, even at a certain risk to herself, was explained to her everlasting honour!—At first he nearly sunk under the blow, and felt that his sufferings on the loss of his wife, were nothing in comparison of what he now endured. —'T was sweet, 't was soothing, to weep for her while he imagined her virtuous;—'t was bitter, 't was maddening, to mourn over her as vicious, and as the victim of vice!—"However," said he to himself, "I will have the satisfaction of revenge!—And as soon as he could set sail for England he did, in pursuit of his treacherous friend and of his wife's seducer. He found him at last at Cheltenham, and sent him a challenge; but instead of meeting him, he sent him a reply importing that he would not fight him, and left the place. But Captain Montgomerie pursued and traced him to W——; having first written a letter to Ella expressive of her great merit, and his deep sense of it. The day after he reached W——, being resolved to force Mr. Baddeley into the field, he loaded his pistols and went in search of him.—He found him in a coffee-house surrounded by gentlemen. Nor, had he been less angry, could he have beheld without horror, not unmixed with pity, the ravages which vice and intemperance had made in the once handsome and admired Baddeley; the man whom the woman he adored had preferred to him; the man who had destroyed her virtue first, and ultimately been the means of hastening her to the tomb! Captain Montgomerie gazed on him for a few moments un-

seen by him, and with a look of such agony as occasioned a motion of surprise in the bystanders to whom Baddeley was speaking, which occasioned the latter to turn round; and as he did so, his eyes rested on Captain Montgomerie.—He started, staggered to a chair, and hid his face with his hands.

"Mr. Baddeley, sir," said Captain Montgomerie in a voice almost inarticulate with emotion, "I wish to have a private conversation with you."

"Sir, I deny it."

"Sir, I will force you to grant it."

At length, after a pause, Baddeley started up and exclaimed, "Well, if it must be so, it must; but before I die I will do an act of justice; I will clear the reputation of a most innocent and injured woman.—Take notice, all who are here present, that I, John Baddeley, most solemnly declare, having the fear of death before my eyes, that I am the father of the child now under the care of Mrs. Vane, late Ella Mordaunt, alias Aubrey; and that Mrs. Montgomerie, her cousin, was the mother of it."

"Villain!" exclaimed Montgomerie, "and do you boast of your wickedness?"—and was approaching him, but was held back.

"No;—I say this only to do justice to an aspersed and exemplary woman;—for that gentleman would not do it to screen the fame of his wife.—The unhappy Lucy summoned, I find, to her death-bed this lady, her first cousin, and there bequeathed to her protection and her *silence* the fruit of our guilt.—How nobly she *kept* the secret so trusted, how kindly she has watched over the pledge so bequeathed, even at certain risks and misery to herself, I call on you present, inhabitants of W——, to testify to and admire!—And now, Captain Montgomerie, I am at your service."

But what Baddeley hoped would happen, while he said that, did happen, and immediately;—some one had stolen out and given information to the magistrates, that a duel was likely to take place; and both gentlemen, as they were leaving the city, were put under arrest; while Montgomerie, disappointed of his vengeance, which this wild and wanton exposure of his wife's infamy had made him more greedy of than ever, was taken to Bower Wood by Colonel Vane, who happened to be passing through the town.—But Montgomerie was spared the guilt of taking justice into his own hands, for the wretched Baddeley a day or two after drank himself, at a tavern, into an apoplexy of intoxication, from which he never recovered;—and the wise and pious reasoning of Ella and her husband at length restored Montgomerie to his proper tone of feeling and of acting. But he could not bear to see the little Ella; and happily for herself, considering the circumstances of her birth, the child, having inherited the consumptive tendency of her mother, fell into a rapid decline, after an eruptive fever, which carried her off in a few days; nor could Ella, though she tenderly loved her, look on her death, in her situation, as otherwise than a blessing.

It was agreed when they married, that Ella and Colonel Vane, whom ill health obliged to quit the army, should reside sometimes on his estate and sometimes on Ella's, and Mrs. Vane in a house in Colonel Vane's Park, as she persisted, perhaps wisely, in refusing their earnest entreaties that she should reside with them.

"Listen to me," said Ella to her husband soon after they were united—"I protest against residing in London, or to staying company in the house, except it be men and their wives, for fear of relapses; for I am well convinced that jealousy and suspicion, though like a tendency to certain disorders they may be kept under with care and attention to avoid the *food* that calls them forth, are never to be wholly eradicated, and may break forth from the slightest and most unexpected causes."

"This is very severe, and even *ungenerous*, Ella," said Colonel Vane.

"Not at all;—and how can you consider it as such, when you, in spite of all my seclusion under the eye of your mother, and the innocent activity of my life during your absence, could again believe, against all *possibility*, that I was the mother of poor little Ella? Can you, after *this*, suppose that you would not be apt to see cause for jealousy in any warmly-expressed kindness towards an agreeable guest?"

"But you would mean nothing, you know; and convinced of that, I should not suspect;—besides, your manners are altered."

"Ay, so they are, and I hope will continue to be so; but who that has once erred, can be sure of never erring again? and the only security is avoiding temptation.—For you, and you alone, I am contented to live; you alone I wish to please.—*You* may occasionally enter the gay world, for I am not jealous, and *I* can rely on your affection and honour; but I will remain in retirement, which the habit of occupation will always render pleasing to me; and I will consider the pain I inflict on myself, of occasional separation from you, as a just punishment for that presumption which made me, because I was conscious of my innocence, dare to set appearances and the restraints of decorum at defiance. I *know* my manner was too familiar, too inviting; I know that it provoked and tolerated from your sex too much familiarity; and that, but for my manners, neither the writer of the letters, nor *you*, could ever have admitted a suspicion of my guilt. Convinced of this, I have always inculcated on those under my care, what has been the result of my own painful experience, that the woman violates her duty both to society and herself, who gives any one reason to say, or even to insinuate, that APPEARANCE IS AGAINST HER."

END OF TALES OF REAL LIFE.

VALENTINE'S EVE.

CHAPTER I.

In the year eighteen hundred and odd, General Shirley was dining at the house of a friend who lived at the distance of about twenty miles from London, when it was daily expected that an engagement of great importance in its probable results, would take place between our fleet and that of the enemy.

As the glass gaily circulated, the patriotic sentiments of the company were more warmly and more loudly expressed, till General Shirley declared, that though he had a son on board the admiral's ship, and though that son was an only child, he had rather he should fall in the ensuing engagement, than that the arms of England should not prove victorious.

"Bravo! Well said, and nobly felt," cried the gentleman next him.

"That is what I call a disinterested and true love of one's country," observed another. —But before approbation of the General's Roman virtue had echoed round the table, the father's feelings had resumed their empire; and while his lip quivered with strong emotion, a pang like that of remorse had struck across his bosom; for this son, this only child whose death he had allowed himself to contemplate as a preferable event to the defeat of the English powers, had been for years an exile from the general's presence, though not from his affections, because he had contracted a clandestine and unsuitable marriage. The consequence was, that Captain Shirley, on the death of his wife, whom his father had resolutely refused to receive as such, rejected the proffered advances of his now repentant parent, and had gone on board the admiral's vessel as a volunteer in the service, having been some time on shore a post captain without a ship.

"I believe," thought General Shirley, "I could better bear to lose my poor boy were I on good terms with him;" and by the time that the hour for breaking up arrived, much of the General's patriotic glow had subsided; and the image of his long-exiled William rose to his view dearer and more distinct than he had lately beheld it.

"Call my carriage up directly!" cried the General, eager to escape to the indulgence of his now perturbed thoughts; when, just as he was about to depart, news arrived from London that there had been an engagement; that our fleet was victorious, and that a general illumination was at that moment taking place.

Shouts, unimpeded shouts, burst from the company. The general shouted also; but his was the faintest shout of all.

"Come, gentlemen, let us go back, and take another bottle to the health of the brave admiral," said the master of the house. "General, General, surely, you will not leave us?"

"Excuse me, excuse me," he replied in a faltering tone; "I wish much to hasten to town, to hear if there be any return of the killed and wounded."

The two last words were scarcely audible; and he felt that they were so; hastily, therefore, entering his carriage to conceal his emotion, he bowed in silence, and drove off; leaving the same men, who had applauded, so lately, the Roman virtue of the patriot, to sympathize with, to pity, and to love, the more natural sensibility of the parent.

"John," cried the General to his servant, who was on the barouche seat, "do pray desire those fellows to drive faster."

John obeyed;—but neither four nor six nor eight horses could have driven the General as fast as his impatience desired. At length, however, London, and London in one blaze of light, flashed on the tearful eyes of General Shirley.

"It is true—it is true, then!" murmured he; "and God help the widow, the fatherless, and the—" childless he *would* have added; but the word died away on his lips; and the lifted eye of anxious supplication and fearful hope finished the impulsive prayer.

"John, tell them to drive to the Admiralty," said the general, as soon as they reached the entrance of Parliament-street.

"The Admiralty, sir! Impossible; the crowd is so great."

"True, true," he replied; "therefore let me out; I'll walk to the first coffee-house, and then walk home."

Accordingly the carriage made its way as well as it could; and John being told by the general to accompany it, his agitated master went in pursuit of a coffee-house.

In the morning he had walked lame and fancied the gout coming on; but now he walked at the rate of four miles in the hour, whenever he found a clear place before him. —At last he reached the place of which he was in search; and having entered the room, he sunk down on one of the seats, and called for a gazette.

"Here is one just come in!" said the waiter.

The general seized it; and hastily averting his eye from the letter giving an account of the battle, he looked for the fatal list. But before he found it, the name of Captain Shirley caught his attention in the middle of the letter to the Admiralty; and he read that, after boarding most gallantly one of the enemy's

ships, and acts of almost incredible valour, Captain Shirley had been struck by a spent ball from another vessel, and had died in the moment of victory!—The paper fell from the hand of the bereaved parent.

"Thanks to the gods, my boy has done his duty!" broke not from the pale lip of the father; but, expressing by a groan alone the deep unmitigated anguish of his soul, he staggered into the streets, unheeding either the shouts, the illuminations, or the crowds that pressed around him. His house was in New-street, Spring Gardens; and he had just self-possession enough to take the turn which led to it. But long before he reached that turn, he had been painfully called from the contemplation of the internal view, to a consciousness of the external one; for the populace, seeing by his cockade that he was an officer, called on him to throw up his hat with them in honour of our brave tars; and making a desperate effort he had obeyed them. But soon after, he was met and accosted by a set of intoxicated young men, who addressed him by the title of "My fine fellow of a veteran," and desired him to shout for ———, and chorus them in the first stanza of "Rule Britannia!" This was too much to bear; and regarding them with a look stern almost to wildness and ferocity, he exclaimed, "Boys! let me pass this moment!" But while they were preparing to impede his passage till he had done as they commanded, one of them, more sober than the rest, saw and recognised him. Immediately, struck with pity and self-reproach, the young man exclaimed, "For shame! let him pass! It is poor General Shirley!"

The name operated in an instant on their feelings, and almost with a sobering influence; for, with a respectful bowing of the head, they suddenly fell back; and one of them exclaimed, "God bless and support you, sir!"

The general quickened his pace involuntarily, for the epithet "*poor* General Shirley" had roused his feelings to a pitch of agony which he wanted to escape from. But it was impossible; and suddenly slackening his speed, he felt as if his senses would forsake him before he reached his home.

Little was General Shirley aware that an anxious eye was watching him, and a willing though trembling arm was waiting to offer him its weak but eager support.

"It is General Shirley! father of the brave Captain Shirley who died so nobly!" and "Poor man! just heard the news I suppose," and other remarks of the kind, had gone from one person to another, till they reached the ears of a girl who was standing near the group of men that had accosted General Shirley, and whose attention had been forcibly attracted by the wild air of the almost frantic parent.

"General Shirley! Is that General Shirley?" she exclaimed—"What! the father who—"

"Yes—the same," replied a gentleman near her.

The girl waited to hear no more; but hastily darting through the crowd she followed the General, and, wholly unheeded by him, beheld his tottering gait, and prepared herself to break his impending fall by catching him in her arms. However, stimulated to further exertion by the sight of his own door, the General struggled a moment longer against his sensations, and knocked feebly. The young girl repeated the knock often and loudly, but unheeded by the object of her care, whose head now sunk against the post, and whose heart died within him still more, when he saw his house alone unlighted amidst the general joy, and felt why it was thus distinguished by its gloom.

When the door opened, the general must have fallen into the hall, but for his youthful supporter, who dragged him from it, and leaned his head against her shoulder. At this moment the door was completely thrown open; and the astonished servants, receiving their insensible master in their arms, bore him to the sofa in an adjoining room. Thither, unseen, or rather unconsidered by the by-standers, followed the stranger girl; and while means were taking to revive him, she raised herself on a chair, and looked on with clasped hands, and a countenance of mixed but woful expression. But as soon as the General recovered his senses, the stranger girl jumped hastily down, and, by the noise she made in so doing, caused a gentleman to turn round and to observe her, who, hitherto unconscious of her presence, had been assisting in the recovery of the sufferer. The gentleman started when he saw her, with surprise not unmixed with emotion; for it was impossible not to discover in her pale and agitated countenance the expression of deep and poignant sorrow. Besides, he thought her features familiar to him; and lowering his voice he hastily asked the servant who she was and whence she came.

"Indeed we can't tell, my lord," replied the gentleman out of livery; "but she followed my master in, and when we opened the door she was supporting him in her arms."

The stranger girl, abashed and alarmed at this inquiry and this answer, (for though spoken in a low voice she overheard it,) now retreated with hasty steps, hoping to escape unobserved; but seeing that the General's eyes were re-closed, she stopped, and with a trembling voice said, "I suppose it is quite sure that he *will* recover."

"O yes! he is almost quite recovered now, madam," replied the gentleman in a kind, encouraging tone. And at this moment the General starting up looked eagerly towards her, and inquired who that lady was, while the object of his inquiry tried to leave the room.

"Stop her," cried he; "I have a confused

recollection of some one's saving me from falling."

"Right, sir," said one of the servants; "and it was this young lady who supported you and followed you in when the door opened."

"Yes," added the gentleman, "and she has kindly stayed to see you recover."

"But I am going away directly now," cried the stranger girl.

"No, no," said the General rising; "stop—tell me, did you know and *pity* me, that you followed me in and stayed here till I recovered?"

"I did, I did."

"Perhaps you too have lost some one you loved, in this engagement?" said the gentleman, inquiringly.

"O yes, yes."

"Then you can indeed feel for me," observed the General.

"O, sir," she replied, "there is only you in the wide world that can truly sympathize with me."

"Are then our griefs so similar, my poor child?"

The stranger girl, while vainly endeavouring to reply, burst into tears.

"Lionel! Lord Shirley, do speak to her; ask her who she is."

"Will you inform us, madam," said Lord Shirley, in a soothing voice, "whom the General has to thank for this kind attention?"

"Not now; not now," she replied, "some other time; some other time;—but I am an orphan, a friendless orphan."

"Rendered so by this *last* engagement?"

"Yes, yes. And now let me go."

"What, alone?" inquired Lord Shirley.

"I *came* alone."

"True; and it is strange that a young creature like you should be alone in the streets, and on such a night as this."

"O sir!" she exclaimed in agony, "they made me *wild*, and I rushed out of the house; I *could* not, *would* not stay at home to see the house I lived in lighted up as if in joy for my poor father's death!"

"Brutes! Who could do so?" cried the General, indignantly; "my house, you see, is *dark* as my *soul*."

"Ay, and it suits me," she returned.

"Come hither, my poor orphan girl! and be assured that I will befriend you," cried the General, for a while diverted from his own sorrow by the sight of hers. So saying, he drew her reluctantly towards him, and gazed earnestly on her half-averted face. Lord Shirley gazed as earnestly; and, telling the servants that they might withdraw, awaited in some emotion the termination of this singular scene,—a scene which was at least useful, by drawing the General's attention from his own severe affliction.

"And so you are an orphan! and you live with brutes, poor child! But come, tell me your father's name at least."

"Oh no, not now—not—"

"So you said before. This is very mysterious!"

"Very," returned Lord Shirley, thoughtfully. "My dear General," added he, "tell me did you never see eyes and eyebrows and a chin like those?" directing his eye to the now blushing face of the stranger.

The General gazed on her, started, breathed short, and calling for a glass of wine that stood near, drank it off in great agitation.

The stranger girl, meanwhile, escaped from his encircling arm, but now found her flight arrested by that of Lord Shirley.

"Child!" cried the General, in a solemn tone, "I insist on your revealing your name and situation."

The stranger girl, awed and affected, sunk upon her knees; and while the General lifted up the dark and glossy ringlets that obscured her eyes and brow, she clasped her hands together, and looked piteously and imploringly in his face.

"Speak, speak," he rejoined; "who are you?"

"I am the daughter of your son."

"I thought so," exclaimed Lord Shirley, in a tone of pleasure; while the General, after gazing intently on her one moment more, raised her in his arms, and clasping her convulsively to his bosom, wept over her in speechless emotion; but suddenly releasing her, he said:

"I must have proof, *substantial* proof." On which the trembling girl took out of her bosom a letter and a picture.

"This," said she, in a faint voice, "is my last letter from him, and came with the despatches; and this is his picture."

"Take it away, take it away," cried the General; "and here, do you read the letter, Shirley. I can't bear to look at either. However, these are proofs sufficient; and, O thou merciful Providence! I thank——Leave us, Lionel." Then, while he clasped his agitated granddaughter in his arms again, Lord Shirley, little less affected himself, left the newly-discovered relations together.

CHAPTER II.

The letter presented by Catherine Shirley to her grandfather, which he dared not look at, but which he gave to Lord Shirley to read, was as follows:

"My dearest child,—Orders are issued for a general engagement to-morrow, and this may be the last time I shall ever address you. Mark then, and attend to my last commands!

"I have at length written to my father, and the letter of a son to a parent. I have told my father where to find you, and have bequeathed you to his *care;* and when he knows you, I am sure he will also take you to his *love.* Then, let me conjure you to forget for ever your mother's wrongs, and your father's misery. Had my father not been under influence, I know he would have acted differently, and we might all now have been the happy inmates of his roof. But God willed it otherwise, and I submit. And *now*, that it is perhaps too late, I would give worlds to see my father once more, and exchange forgiveness with him! But let *your tenderness* make him amends for the long loss of mine. Be to him the child I ought to have been, and the child you have ever been to me! Be his pride and blessing, as you have ever been mine, my child; and could I have learnt to be happy *again*, I should have found my happiness in you. But it could not be. Morning dawns! and every thing is in motion around me.

"Oh! I could utter a thousand tender wishes, and give way to a thousand tender feelings!—but I must not unman myself. My child, my child! my sweet, tender, dutiful, affectionate Catherine! farewell! perhaps for ever.

"It is soothing to me to think that, if I fall, you and my father will mourn for me together."

After Lord Shirley had read this letter, he was not disposed to converse at all, as he truly loved his gallant cousin; and he was still less inclined to converse with the lady that now addressed him.

"My lord, Lord Shirley," cried a voice from the staircase, "what is all this fuss about?"

"Pshaw!" muttered Lord Shirley; for the speaker was Mrs. Baynton, the widowed sister of the General; and Lord Shirley was in no humour for hearing or answering her interrogatories at such a moment;—especially as he had very recently parted with her, and in no pleasant humour,—for they had just had a dispute of some length on the propriety of illuminating the house; Mrs. Baynton having contended that private ought always to be lost in public feeling; and that the well-known loyalty of the Shirleys would be properly called in question if the General's house was not lighted up, though his only child had fallen in the glorious strife of arms; while Lord Shirley as warmly declared that such an exhibition of loyalty would be a proof of unnatural insensibility, and an insult to his poor cousin's memory. And as Lord Shirley was the head of her house, and a nobleman also, Mrs. Baynton had such a respect for his opinion, that though it did not *convince* her, she acted upon it, and the house remained unilluminated.

Soon after she had retired to her room, to conceal as she said the grief she felt, but in reality to hide her inability to feel enough, as she had never liked her nephew, because he was not obsequious enough to her will; and therefore she had joined the general's late wife, Captain Shirley's mother-in-law, in schemes to keep the general and his son at variance. It was this lady who now addressed Lord Shirley in the words I have related above; and, as she spoke, invited him to join her in her dressing-room. Lord Shirley at first hesitated to accept the invitation, but recollecting that he should spare the General some trouble and some pain by revealing to his sister the discovery that had taken place, he followed her into her apartment.

"Dear me, my lord! what does this mean? was there ever any thing so strange? My maid tells me that a girl of the town has followed my brother home!"

"Your maid, madam, must have an inventive imagination."

"How?—Is it not true, then?"

"Certainly not. But lively as the said maid's fancy is, I defy her to imagine who the young person that followed the General turns out to be."

"So, then, you own some one *did* follow him home?"

"Yes, madam,—a poor orphan girl, whom you will be charmed to see and to embrace."

"I!"

"Yes! you will rejoice as much as *I* do, to see the orphan child of your poor nephew, Captain Shirley, acknowledged by the General, her grandfather, and received to his heart and his protection."

"What ridiculous stuff is this, my lord? What child are you talking of?"

"Of your *great-niece*, madam—Miss Shirley."

"There *is* no such person; and if the girl you left with the General calls herself any such thing, she is an impostor. I know the first child died, and I never heard of there being another."

"Well, madam, I shall say no more; as you deal in assertion only, and we in proofs."

"In proofs!"

Luckily for Lord Shirley, as Mrs. Baynton was becoming very angry, the General's bell rang at this moment, and he was summoned to him.

"Well, Lionel," said the General as soon as he saw him, "I have been humbling myself before my Maker, and before her.—Yes, I have knelt to her, and asked her to forgive my unkindness to my poor boy and her poor mother; and she says she hopes she shall be able in time to love me, for she seems a very honest girl, and no flatterer. Oh, Lionel! surely, the hand of Providence was visible in thus directing the fatherless girl, at such a moment as this, to the childless parent!"

Here the General's voice failed him; while Catherine Shirley sat by his side with the

look of one calm, because overwhelmed by the acuteness and variety of her sensations.

"But where 's my sister? Let her come to me;—It is very strange she did not come to me during my fit."

Lord Shirley rang the bell to desire Mrs. Baynton to be called; when, as he turned to look at the wild countenance of his newly-found relation, he saw it assume a look of terror, and beheld her, involuntarily, as it were, get closer to the General; for Catherine knew from her unhappy father, the character of her aunt, and she trembled at the thought of being introduced to so formidable a being. At length, Mrs. Baynton entered; and the General, bursting into tears, stretched out his arms to embrace her. But no answering tear proclaimed her sympathy with his sorrows. True, she suffered his embrace; but scarcely could she be said to return it; and had not the General been wholly absorbed in his own emotion, he must have observed the repelling coldness of her manner.

"Oh, Jane!" said he at length, "you see it has pleased God to punish me for my hardness of heart, by depriving me of my poor boy; but, kind in his wrath, and tempering justice with mercy, he has sent me, at the same moment, an antidote to the bane, in this dear girl!—Sister, take to your heart your great-niece and my granddaughter—Catherine Shirley, my poor William's child."

Whether it was that there was something in the sound of great-niece, particularly unpalatable to the ear of Mrs. Baynton, I will not pretend to say; but certain it is, that, haughtily retreating back from the General as he drew Catherine towards her, she exclaimed, "Stuff and nonsense, brother! she is no more William's child than I am."

"How?" cried the General, "is the woman insane?"

"No, brother, but you are, or you would not have fancied a trolloping-looking miss like that your granddaughter."

"And why not?" answered the General, almost choked with emotion.

"Why not? Is it likely that Miss Shirley, if there be such a young person, should be running about the streets by herself at this time of night?"

"Yes—*very* possible, most oracular gentlewoman.—Not Miss Shirley, living *where* and *as* a Miss Shirley *ought* to live, but a poor orphan girl residing with a *brute*, would have done exactly as Miss Shirley did."

"And so you think that poor thing is Catherine Shirley, your granddaughter? How do you know that your son ever had a daughter?" angrily interrupted his sister.

"What! have you forgotten that four years ago when William disclosed his marriage, he implored me to allow him to introduce his wife and daughter to me? Answer—have you forgotten that?"

"I do remember something of it now.—But how do you know that this girl is that daughter?"

"By her own simple tale, and other incontrovertible tokens which she has about her. Produce them, dear child."

Catherine obeyed; but in vain. The irreconcilable aunt exclaimed, "Well; but the real Miss Shirley may be dead, and these things have been stolen."

"Stolen!" cried the astonished Catherine; "what is it, then, she takes me for?" clinging to the arm of the General.

"For an impostor, miss," vociferated Mrs. Baynton.

This was more than the General's patience could bear; but in vain did he strive to utter the anger with which his bosom swelled. However, had his command of words been equal to his rage, and had he studied for hours how best to wound the feelings of his provoking antagonist, he could not have succeeded more effectually than he did, by uttering with a vehement and impressive gesture, "Sister, you are,—you are, a—an old woman!"

"And you, brother, are an old fool!" returned Mrs. Baynton, forgetting in her wrath the decorum of language proper to be observed by a daughter of the house of Shirley.

"Madam," replied the General, trying to be calm, "let me tell you a plain tale. In the first place, it was my intention to seek out the daughter of my lost son as soon as I recovered my recollection after I saw the fatal paper; little thinking that the being who was then in my thoughts was at that very moment by my side, watching my tottering steps with pity and interest, because she knew who I was, and why I suffered."

"Mighty sentimental, indeed! But how came miss in the street, I say? Answer me that?"

"Because the brute with whom she lived insisted on illuminating the house, and thereby drove the wretched orphan forth like a bedlamite."

Here, Lord Shirley could not help giving a loud hem, which was not lost on Mrs. Baynton; and she angrily answered, "A brute! No! I think such demonstrations of loyalty very proper.—Private feeling ought to be forgotten in the public good. (Here the General groaned aloud, for he remembered his own patriotic boasting at the dinner-table.)—Do you think, General, the Romans and the *Spartans* would have called the person you mentioned a brute? No, brother—no—and I blush for you, General Shirley; I blush to see you so unlike that admirable being, a *Roman father!*"

"'Sdeath, madam! it is quite enough for a family to have in it a Roman old woman! I believe your heart is made of marble, sister."

"And your head, General, of a much softer material."

"I had better go away,—I had better return home," said the terrified Catherine.

"Home!" exclaimed the General—"home! Is not this your home, child? Never, never while I live, shall you have any other home than my house! nor my house any other mistress!"

"Mighty fine! mighty fine indeed! So then, without further inquiry you resolve to bring home nobody-knows-who, and turn your poor sister out of doors!"

Here she gave way to a most outrageous fit of passion, concealed in the sobs of an hysteric. But the General knew how to distinguish between the sob of grief and that of passion; and, approaching her with a look at once indignant and commanding, was about to say something relative to his future intentions which he might perhaps in a cooler moment have wished to retract, when Lord Shirley thought it safer for all parties that he should interfere; and, gently putting the General back with his hand, he said,

"Dear sir, let me speak to Mrs. Baynton—perhaps I shall be able to convince her;" whilst the General, faint and exhausted with contending emotions, was very glad to be saved further exertion for the present.

"Look up, madam," said Lord Shirley soothingly, "and suffer yourself to survey the face of her whom, perhaps with proper caution, you consider as an object of suspicion." But Mrs. Baynton continued to sob and to hide her face.

"Nay, do let me prevail on you to listen to my request." Then, taking the almost reluctant hand of the alarmed Catherine, he led her up to her aunt.

"See here!" added he, respectfully parting and holding back the ebon ringlets that hung in wild disorder over the face of Catherine Shirley—"see here! Surely you have often beheld features like these? I know that you are proud of the blood and gallant deeds of the Shirleys; but have you not equal reason to be proud of that peculiar eye, and brow, and forehead, which belong to your branch of the family, and which you must behold in your looking-glass every day?"

This was the way to melt the marble of Mrs. Baynton's heart—and not calling her an old woman; and she very soon uncovered her face, looked at the Shirley eyes, brows, and forehead, with something like complacency, and at length exclaimed—

"Well, really I do think I see the likeness you mention; but she has certainly not gotten the Shirley nose, my lord. However, if there can be any satisfactory *references*, I am sure I shall not be averse to receive her as my niece."

"Certainly not, when properly convinced," observed Lord Shirley; who, alarmed at the evident agitation of the General at having the slightest shade of doubt thrown over a relationship from which he derived at that moment his greatest source of earthly consolation, thought it was better to soothe this provoking woman into the necessary conviction, especially as her hesitation to believe the forlorn-looking girl before them to be the daughter of her nephew was not devoid of proper and necessary caution. For, however a gently swelling tear may add a sort of touching grace to the eyes on some occasions, I never yet could discover that the swollen eyelids, swelled cheeks, and inflamed complexion incident to violent and continued bursts of sorrow, had any other effect, even on beauty, except to annihilate its existence for the time being. And though the dark colour, and the peculiar length of the Shirley eye, together with the beautifully full and finely marked brow, and the low well-shaded forehead of the family, could not but be visible in the face of Catherine, in despite of tears, paleness, and agitation—still it is very certain that a less interested and less accurate observer could not, in a girl with loose disordered hair streaming over her shoulders, dressed only in her coloured morning-gown, now draggled and torn during her often dangerous progress through the crowd, have been very easily induced to believe they saw the granddaughter, and probably the heiress, of a General and a Shirley.

"But may I not go back to Mrs. Merle's for to-night?" asked Catherine.

"No—I will send to say you are now under *my* protection; and *to-morrow*, if it be necessary, I will see Mrs. Merle," replied the General.

"But dear sir, pray send directly," rejoined Catherine; "for the poor soul will be really much alarmed on my account, and Lucy her daughter is very kind to me, and loves me dearly."

"I will send this moment," said the General. "She lives, you say, just at the foot of Westminster-bridge?—And you, madam, if you please, will order a bed to be got ready for Miss Shirley."

"What! at this time of night! She had much better go home and come back to-morrow."

"Have I not said she shall stay here?" replied the General in a voice of thunder.

"But there is no bed aired."

"No! You know the best bed was slept in last night."

"The *best* bed! Yes—but—"

"But what? Do you think that too good for Miss Shirley? too good for my only comfort, for the child of my lost William!" Here, folding his new-found relative to his heart, he gave way to a violent burst of tears, which affected even his sister, and made her almost resolve to thwart him no longer.

When he recovered himself, he rang the bell, saying as he did so, "Now, before I re-

tire for the night, let me do an act of duty.—And O that the blessed spirits of my lost son and his lamented wife could hover over me while I perform it!"

When a servant appeared he said, "John, you must go to this place," writing down the address on a card, "and tell Mrs. Merle, the owner of the house, that Miss Shirley is here, and will stay the night; but that to-morrow I request Mrs. Merle to call on me.—Yet no; say that to-morrow at twelve Miss Shirley will call on her. But before you go, John, call hither every servant in the house."

John obeyed; and presently the room was filled with servants of both sexes.

"I sent for you all in," said the General, hardly able to speak from various emotions, "that you may hear me acknowledge this young lady to be Catherine Shirley, the only child of my only child Captain Shirley, now, alas! no more; and also to receive my orders that you henceforth consider her as my heiress and your mistress, and treat her and respect her accordingly."

The servants bowed, and felt not a little pleased at the idea of having a young mistress, the old one not being much to their tastes. But just as they were retiring, the General heard a sob, and saw in the back-ground, an old woman, who, having passed her youth in the service of his family, was, he thought, privileged to remain in it, though past active work, till the end of her existence.

"Ah! are you there, Norris?" cried the General with a quivering lip; "I thought you must be gone to bed. I am sure you are glad of what you have just heard; as—." But before he could finish his sentence Catherine had turned round, had seen Norris, and bursting into tears had run to her, and sunk sobbing on her shoulder.

"What is all this?" cried the General kindly.

"More stage effect," said Mrs. Baynton.

But when Norris recovered her speech, she explained the scene, by simply stating that she had occasionally visited her dear young master at his own house, and therefore was well known to his child.

"Proof! irrefragable proof! Mrs. Baynton," cried the General triumphantly.

"And contrivance too, no doubt; I dare say Norris contrived the rencontre of to-night."

"It must have been in a sick-bed then, madam," replied Mrs. Norris; "for there I have been these two days; but when I heard that the child of my dear lost young master was in this house, I felt well again and got up, in hope of seeing her sweet face, and hearing what I have heard."

"You shall not stay up a minute longer, my dear woman," cried the General in a hoarse but affectionate voice; "go to bed directly! And Catherine shall go up stairs with you; for I dare say she loves you better than any of us at present;—so go away together. And you," addressing himself to the upper housemaid, "shall go into Mrs. Norris's room and let Miss Shirley know when her bed, the best bed, is ready for her."

This was indeed a kindness to poor Catherine, who, in the affectionate and faithful friend of her father, saw an object certainly dearer to her than any other under her grandfather's roof; and for a moment her dark eye beamed with some of its usual brilliancy; then dropping a curtsy, she eagerly placed the arm of Mrs. Norris in hers.

But the General opened his arms to her; and throwing herself into them, she met his kiss of mingled feelings; and curtsying coldly to her great-aunt, but kindly to Lord Shirley, she gladly retired with her humble but endeared companion.

With her vanished all the energy of the bereaved parent; and hastily taking the chamber-candlestick which Lord Shirley gave him, he returned with a convulsive grasp the affectionate pressure of his kinsman's hand; and rushing from the room was seen no more that night.

Spite of the lateness of the hour—for it was near midnight—Mrs. Baynton would fain have detained Lord Shirley to talk to him of her distresses, and complain of the temper and tyranny of her brother, and his folly in pretending to put this probably uneducated child at the head of his family. But disgusted with her want of sensibility to the loss of his cousin, Captain Shirley, and of proper feeling for the distresses of her brother, and his heart and head both full of the scene which he had witnessed, the young earl coldly wished her good night, alleging the lateness of the hour. And angry with every one, Mrs. Baynton retired to her apartment. But before she went to bed she regained some composure of mind from the remarks of her officious maid, who was full of wonder at the discovery of the evening, full of indignation at the idea of her dear mistress's being likely in future to rank as second-best in the family, and full of surprise to think that the General's gentleman, John, and the other men, should think the new Miss Shirley at all good-looking.

When John reached Mrs. Merle's, he found the family in great consternation. But while the daughter vented her terror for the safety of Miss Shirley in tears and lamentations, the mother gave way to her fears and her resentment in loud and vehement abuse of the runaway. John's visit, and the message he brought were, however, equally welcome to both, inasmuch as it gave assurance of Miss Shirley's being in safety. But the idea of

her residing in future with her grandfather was a very unwelcome one to the interested mother, as she would lose by that means a certain income, though, as the means of good to Catherine, it gratified her more disinterested and benevolent daughter. Still, with all her faults, Mrs. Merle was a conscientious woman, John said; for, till he produced the card with General Shirley's name on it on which he had written her address, she could not be assured Miss Shirley was safe; nor could she rest satisfied without going to the place where John said she was, in order to ascertain her safety; nor would she after all let him return unaccompanied by her own maid, to whose care Mrs. Merle gave what indeed Catherine in the hurry of her spirits had forgotten to send for, namely, nightclothes and changes of linen.

When Catherine awoke the next morning, and awoke to the entire consciousness of where she was, mingled and overwhelming were the sensations that arose in her bosom; and with her morning prayer of thankfulness were mixed humble entreaties to be endowed with that resignation which her sense of acute suffering rendered necessary to her. For, true, she was under the roof of her grandfather, and his acknowledged, his cherished heiress.—But how came she there? and why was she so readily received and acknowledged? —Alas! it was by the greatest of all misfortunes, the loss of her only surviving and idolized parent. Dearly, therefore, had her present proud distinction been purchased. Besides, was she not now receiving the love and protection of him who had refused to acknowledge her beloved mother?—Was she not also likely to live under the same roof with that relentless woman, who had increased her father's self-reproof for having married in a clandestine manner, by writing to him letters full of bitter reproach? And while these afflicting thoughts thronged upon her memory, it required all her strength of mind, unusually strong as that mind was, for the early age of eighteen, to enable her to bear up against the power of contending emotions. But at length she was comforted, by recollecting that it was her father's last command she should reside with the General, and expiate his faults towards him by her filial love and devoted attention. Yet severe was the conflict in her mind, and powerful were its effects on her frame; for, as soon as she rose, an alarming attack of fever forced her to return to bed again, and before night she was so seriously ill that the General, who had shut himself up all the day to indulge his sorrow unseen in his own apartment, was now anxious to leave it, that he might watch with apprehensive affection in that of his new-found treasure—a treasure which he feared had been bestowed on him only to be taken away just as he had learned to feel its inestimable value.

CHAPTER III.

It cannot be supposed that Mrs. Baynton herself would be a very tender nurse to her new-found and unwelcome relation; nor is it at all surprising that, having a great dread of infection, she should forbear during Catherine's illness, which was pronounced to be of an infectious nature, from making any personal inquiries concerning her. But she was very careful to prevent any noise, lest it should disturb the invalid; and she provided every thing that was necessary for her niece's comfort with praiseworthy attention.

This lady was the only sister of General Shirley, and when in the prime of her life she was celebrated for her beauty, her wit, and her accomplishments. But when lips cease to be young, the sayings which before passed for witty, often sink in general estimation into commonplace flippancies; and in this age of accomplishments, the usual proficiency made by a boarding-school Miss forty years ago, would never entitle a young lady to be reckoned really accomplished.

However, at the time of day when the honourable Mr. Baynton wooed and won her virgin heart, Miss Shirley was universally admired, and Mr. Baynton was thought a fortunate man, to carry off the prize which had been so often and so vainly attempted before. Whether he found his conquest worth the pains it had cost him, it is impossible to tell; but, had he lived, it is probable that the General's sister and Catherine's great-aunt might have been rendered a more amiable person than either subsequently found her.

Mr. Baynton united to strong sense, great firmness of character and great command of temper, which enabled him to treat as she deserved the petted and violent baby whom he had taken to wife. But just as he had lived long enough to convince her that hysterics, sullenness, eating no dinner or supper, and other devices of the kind, had no power to affect his feelings in appearance, or carry one point on which her perverse heart was fixed, this rational and salutary guide was taken away from her, and Mrs. Baynton was left with all the original infirmity of her temper increased by sorrow and disappointment; for she loved her husband, and liked the state in which his large income, the chief of which went on his death to the male heir, enabled her to live.

When the General's second wife died, he requested her to come and preside over his family; a request she gladly acceded to, because, though her own fortune was good, and her jointure rather considerable, they did not enable her to live as the General did, and Mrs. Baynton was more than a little attached to the pomp and circumstances of life. What else she was, will be, I think, sufficiently evident in the course of the narrative.

Perhaps this will be a proper time to give

some account of Mrs. Merle and her daughter Lucy, that affectionate friend of Catherine, who vainly endeavoured to be permitted to be her nurse when informed of her severe and even dangerous illness.

Mrs. Merle's husband was a brewer and linen-draper in a country town, and she herself was the daughter of a farmer in the neighbourhood. For some years they seemed to be in the way of making a fortune; but Mr. Merle was an extravagant, improvident, speculating man; and all his wife's industry and frugality proved insufficient at length to save him from bankruptcy—the consequence of his own vices. Not that he attributed his ruin to himself, and living in a style beyond what his means and original station in life warranted; on the contrary, to the times, the taxes, and the government, he imputed his misfortunes—and was one of the many republicans, or democrats, some twenty years ago, whom profligacy and poverty led to rally round that respectable standard, which was originally erected from the purest and most disinterested love of civil and religious liberty. Having vainly endeavoured to get his certificate signed, Mr. Merle, after enduring much poverty and distress, emigrated from tyrannical Britain (as he called it) to free republican America; having instilled into his disappointed wife and youthful daughter the same political sentiments which hatred of all those more prosperous than himself, and the jaundiced feelings of disappointment, had led him to utter and to act upon. But though the vulgar mind and violent temper of the mother learnt from her husband only hatred of the existing government, and an admiration of the system of equality, then so much the subject in debate, that of the daughter was led by her father's conversation, and that of the politicians who assembled at his house, to imbibe the purest flame of liberty and the purest love of republicanism. Eagerly did she read, like Madame Roland, the Lives of Plutarch, and Cornelia and her noble sons were the idols of her young heart; while the vanity of her father was not a little flattered by the orations in praise of liberty which his beautiful patriot, as he called her, was in the habit of repeating to his sympathizing associates. Her father's misfortunes, and her father's wrongs, as he taught her to consider them, bound these opinions still closer to her heart, till virtue and republicanism became identified with each other in her estimation; and she believed that to the privileged orders were confined every species of vice and every description of error.

As she grew older, and became the companion of Catherine Shirley, to whom at first she could hardly forgive her noble connexions and ancient name, she grew more moderate in her feelings, more enlarged in her ideas, and more reserved in disclosing them; and for the sake of Catherine Shirley and her father, Lucy Merle believed that the well-born might be good. But then Lucy recollected with some pleasure, that Catherine's mother was low-born, and a distant connexion of her own; therefore it was but fair to suppose that the influence of low counteracted the baneful influence of noble blood.

This is a faint sketch of the tall, dignified, and beautiful girl, who, with all the republican pride that she could call forth for the occasion, and with the consciousness of more than her sex's usual intellect and eloquence, knocked at the door of General Shirley, to inquire why Miss Shirley had not called on her mother according to her appointment.

Such was the appearance of Lucy Merle, that no one could fancy her less than a gentlewoman; and even the pert maid of Mrs. Baynton, who happened to be in the hall when the door was opened to her, would have treated her with respect, though she was without a servant, had she not heard her talk of her mother, Mrs. Merle; and as Catherine, in her delirium, had raved of Lucy Merle, and Norris had explained whom her poor young lady meant, it was evident to Mrs. Watkins (the maid mentioned above) that the tall girl at the door was the vulgar associate and intimate of Miss Shirley, who her mistress had declared should never, if she could help it, set foot within their doors. Accordingly, when Lucy, as pale as death on hearing that Catherine was ill, earnestly besought to be allowed to see her and wait on her, the officious abigail told her she knew for certain she would not be allowed to see Miss Shirley.

"You *cannot* know it for certain," replied Lucy, "for I am sure there is no one Miss Shirley would so well like to have for a nurse; —and let me but see the General, I am sure he will grant me the permission which I ask."

"You *can't* see him—he is too wretched to see any one; and he never leaves the sick chamber."

"Then let me see the General's sister."

"The General's sister, indeed! My mistress has a name," said Watkins bridling. "I suppose you mean the honourable Mrs. Baynton?"

"Here's a fuss about nothing," cried John coming forward. "If the young lady wishes it, why should she not see the *honourable* Mrs. Baynton? and I'll carry any message from her to my master."

"She see my mistress! and my mistress see her indeed! I will soon show you the odds of that." Then, after casting a contemptuous look on Lucy Merle, she walked up stairs with great dignity.

Had not poor Lucy been wholly absorbed in anxiety for Catherine's illness, this saucy contempt from a servant in the house of a man of rank and fashion would have led into a strain of moral reflection, and the *privileged orders* would not have gained in her estimation by this circumstance. But till Watkins

returned she paced up and down the hall, unconscious of the respectful admiration with which the servants regarded her, and the sympathy they felt for her evidently alarmed affection for their young mistress. At length, full of consequence and spite, Watkins came back from her self-empowered embassy, and told Lucy that her lady could not possibly allow a young person whom she knew nothing about to be admitted to Miss Shirley, especially in her present state; and that she must *insist* on her quitting the house directly.

"But I conclude the General knows nothing of this refusal and this message?" replied Lucy.

"And suppose he does not, miss! do you suppose that my lady is not mistress here, and has not a right to order here?"

"The more's the pity, then," answered Lucy mournfully; "it is always to be lamented when tyrants govern; and I remember well"—but recollecting that she had no right to speak degradingly of a mistress to her servant, she paused before she uttered the remainder of the sentence, which was,—that she well knew Mrs. Baynton's character; and slowly and dejectedly left the door. But John followed her, and said—

"If you think proper, miss, to write to the General, I will take care that he shall have the letter." And Lucy, eagerly thanking him, went home with her heart a little lightened; for she fancied the General would not refuse her request.—Accordingly she wrote to him; and having delivered her letter herself into John's own hand, she waited the result of her application with trembling impatience.

But John's countenance when he came down stairs convinced her she had no favour to expect, even before he spoke; for the kind-hearted man had been met at the door of the General's dressing-room, where he then was, by Mrs. Baynton, who, hastily seizing the letter, desired to know if it had not been brought by that girl in the hall, who was, Watkins told her, Lucy Merle. John was forced to answer "yes;" and that he had promised to deliver it himself into the General's hand.

"Then say I took it from you," replied Mrs. Baynton, entering the room and shutting the door in his face, "and that I shall take care it is delivered to the General."

Accordingly, she said to the General—"Brother, here is a letter from these Merles; I conclude you are not in a frame of mind to attend to business now?"

"Not I—not I;—take away the letter; I can't read it. I can't be troubled now—now that I am half-distracted."

"I thought so," answered his sister, delighted at having carried her point so easily; and with a countenance of triumph she told John to tell his employer that the General could not be troubled, and could not now read the letter. And this message, of which John almost doubted the truth, he was most unwillingly obliged to deliver to Lucy.

She heard it with the most painful feeling of disappointment; especially as the nurse had informed her that Catherine's symptoms continued very unfavourable.

At this moment Mrs. Baynton was passing from the General's to her own room; and Lucy being told by John who she was, suddenly ran after her, and earnestly entreated that she would hear her but for one moment. In vain, however, did she plead; Mrs. Baynton, without even looking at her, ran hastily into her own apartment, at the door of which Mrs. Watkins posted herself, as if to defend the entrance. Nor was her presence there entirely unnecessary; for Lucy was moved by the despair of anxious affection to attempt any thing in order to have carried her purpose;—and would have intruded even into the presence of Mrs. Baynton; but this daring being (she found) impracticable, she addressed her through the half-closed door; and assuring her that Miss Shirley loved her sufficiently to derive pleasure from her presence and attentions, she conjured Mrs. Baynton, for the sake of common humanity, no longer to let her niece be doomed to receive the assiduities of strangers, whom no habitual intimacy could as yet have endeared to her.

"Tell her," said the angry aunt to her maid, "tell her I understand and *resent* the low-born sarcasm; and that my humanity leads me to forbid my niece, Miss Shirley, from intimacy and association with such a person as herself."

"Madam," replied Lucy, approaching the door, but prevented entering it by the officious abigail, "Madam, I *expected* to be forbidden to associate with Miss Shirley when she was *well*, for I am acquainted with the hard heart of aristocracy; but all I ask is to be admitted to her presence when *ill*, and when summer and high-born friends may not be so willing to approach her."

"Approach her, indeed!" cried Mrs. Baynton; "who that could help it would? Has she not an infectious fever?—do you know that, silly girl?"

"She would have nursed me, I am sure, had I had the plague," said Lucy, sobbing; "and all I ask is, at any risk, to be allowed to nurse her; and I am certain if she is asked whether she would not like that I should come to her, she would say 'Yes.' Pray, then, let her be asked the question."

"Absurd! Why, do you not know she is quite delirious?"

Lucy said no more; but clasping her hands, she dropped down on the step of the stairs, and groaned aloud; till even Mrs. Baynton, unable to bear the sound of her distress, desired Watkins to come in and shut the door.

As soon as she was a little recovered the porter begged her to recline in his chair, and

John brought her a glass of wine. This offer she declined; but she told him she had a favour to ask, which she hoped he would be so kind as to grant; and this was, that he would not think it a trouble to answer her inquiries for her sick friend, let her come ever so often. And not only John but the porter and the butler assured her they should think it no trouble; and if she liked to come at the hours the physicians did, she should be welcome to stay in the hall till they were gone again, and speak to them, too, if she liked.

"Kind and humane creatures!" cried Lucy, "you have hearts! You can feel, while—" But here she had resolution to stop, and to content herself with contrasting *mentally* the *tiers état* with the *privileged orders*; and giving, as usual, the palm of desert to the former;—for Lucy was not at all aware that it was from no republican virtue, unknown to the aristocracy, that these footmen were so kind to her, but merely from the very natural influence of youth and beauty in distress;—besides, they hated their old mistress, and were very much disposed, were it only to provoke her, to be civil to the friend of their young one. But as system-mongers see in every thing proofs of the wisdom of their system, Lucy was for a few moments stolen from much of the agony she experienced from her friend's illness, by indignant reflections on the flinty hearts of persons in high life.

Mrs. Baynton meanwhile was equally fortified in her dislike of the low-born, by what she termed the democratic insolence of the girl Merle. And while she remembered the expression of "the hard heart of aristocracy," she felt her dislike of her great-niece increased by the suspicion that she probably had imbibed the same notions.

In the evening Lucy came again, and heard from the attentive John the opinion of the physicians. The next day and the two following ones she regularly repeated her visits morning and evening, and on the fifth morning she had the joy of hearing that Catherine Shirley was declared entirely out of danger.

Though Lucy had republican principles, she wanted republican firmness; and her delight was manifested in a violent flood of tears, while even her friend John could not help saying,

"Dear me, Miss Merle, it is very odd you should take on thus, when my young lady is better! You could do no more if she were going to die."

"Joy has its tears as well as grief," replied Lucy, "my good friend, and mine is now at its height;—but let me show my sense of your kindness and that of your fellow-servants, thus, to the best of my poor ability." So saying, she slipped a piece of silver into each of their hands; and I believe her admiration of the dignity of their natures was somewhat lowered by their acceptance of the little recompense for their kindness which she gave them.

CHAPTER IV.

Though Catherine's disorder was declared to have taken a favourable turn at the end of four days, it left her so weak and languid, and with such a complaint in her eyelids, that it was a full week before she could bear the light; and a note from Lucy Merle by the twopenny post, the only sure conveyance as Lucy now thought, remained unopened till Catherine was alone with Norris, and could desire her to read the contents.

"I think, as well as I can now see," said Catherine, "that note is from my friend Lucy; I wondered I had neither heard from her nor seen her during my illness, but I dare say she has often called or sent to inquire concerning me."

"That she has, indeed, poor thing!" replied Norris; "and if she had been permitted, she would have watched by you day and night."

"Permitted! and who forbade her?" asked Catherine.

"Oh! one who likes to thwart everybody," said Norris; "but I beg pardon, Miss Shirley, and I dare say the young lady will tell you all about it in her note."

Catherine made no more inquiries; for she saw very clearly that her aunt was the person to whom Norris alluded, but she begged the affectionate old woman to read Lucy's note aloud. She did so; and saw with great satisfaction that her friend contented herself with simply stating facts, and made no angry comment whatever on Mrs. Baynton's conduct, though she could not help saying that the servants' great kindness and sympathy made her some amends for unkindness elsewhere.

"I hope she was equally guarded in what she said to my aunt," thought Catherine. Then, as she was unable to write, she begged Norris to go to Mrs. Merle's and tell her and Lucy, that as soon as she was well enough to go out, she would call on them according to her original appointment.

At the end of two days more, Catherine was able to take her seat at the breakfast-table, and for the first time officiated there as the future mistress of the family. At first, when the General and Catherine beheld each other clad in deep mourning,—and recollected not only why they were so clad, but why they were thus united,—they both felt it difficult to control the bitterness of their emotions. Nor could the General recover himself as quickly as Catherine did; because her likeness to her father was so striking, that he was too forcibly reminded of what he had lost, to feel sufficiently grateful for what remained to cheer him.

But by the time breakfast was over, the General was able to look at her face with composure, to listen with delight to the impressive tones of her voice, and to gaze with admiring pride on the symmetry of her commanding figure and the consummate beauty of her

hands. "If," thought he, "the mind and temper be equal to the person, she is indeed an angel."

Soon after breakfast Lord Shirley was announced. The earl had never seen Catherine since the night of her first introduction, and he was agreeably surprised to find the forlorn-looking girl of that night, transformed into an elegant young woman. He, too, was again forcibly struck with the likeness to her father, and could not help distressing Catherine by the earnestness with which he regarded her. The servant now came in to say that the carriage was ready which was to convey Miss Shirley to Mrs. Merle's.

"Under my circumstances, my dear," said the General, "I do not think it would be right for me to accompany you to Mrs. Merle's; and I have not urged her coming hither, because you must have a good many things probably to collect together and bring away, and this no one could do but yourself. Still, you shall not go alone. I dare not ask my sister to accompany you, but you may take Norris."

"Oh! I should like Norris to go with me better than any one," cried Catherine eagerly.

"And with Mrs. Norris for a chaperone, might not I venture to accompany Miss Shirley?" said Lord Shirley.

"Ay, by all means," cried the General, looking pleased at this mark of respect to his granddaughter.

But Catherine, though she did not like to refuse the offer, earnestly wished it had not been made, as she would have preferred a tête-à-tête with Norris. However, she bowed her assent to the earl's proposal, and was preparing to go, having previously summoned Norris, when the General asked her if she had no cloak or shawl; and hearing that she had not, and that her morning pelisse was not come home, he declared she should not go out unless his sister would lend her some warm mantle. But after a pause he said, "I have it! Stay here till I come down again."

During his absence Mrs. Baynton came in, and nodding her head to Catherine, coldly said she was glad to see her down stairs again.

Catherine tried to answer very kindly, but her answer, whether kind or otherwise, was lost on her aunt, as she had extended her hand in friendship to her dear lord, the head of her house, and, in her affectionate greetings to him, wholly disregarded, if she did not entirely forget poor Catherine. But she was made fully sensible of her presence, when the General returned, bringing in his hand a very handsome black velvet pelisse full trimmed with lace.

As soon as she saw it, Mrs. Baynton changed colour, and exclaimed, "Bless me, General! what can you be going to do with that pelisse?"

"Give it to Miss Shirley," coolly replied the General.

"Give it to her! you never would give it to me; and I am sure it will not fit her, she is much too big for it; for my sister, your wife, for whom it was made, was a beautiful slender shape."

"So is your great-niece, my granddaughter," answered the General; "and surely I may give my poor wife's things to whom I please."

"Mighty fine!" while Lord Shirley, who had before heard this pelisse (which the General's love of his wife, who had bought it just before her death, had made him unwilling to part with,) the subject of contention, could not help enjoying this mortification to the vanity and rapacity of Mrs. Baynton. But Catherine, generously distressed at seeing the pain she occasioned, declared it was too good for her to wear, and begged the General to consider what he was doing.

"I have considered, and therefore I act; for who so proper to wear my wife's things as my son's child? So put it on, Miss Shirley, and say no more about it."

Catherine obeyed, and "it fits her as if it was made for her!" exclaimed the delighted General, "does it not, Lionel?"

Lord Shirley readily assented; but Mrs. Baynton declared it to be so tight that she expected the seams would burst every moment.

Catherine said nothing; nor indeed, to the surprise and admiration of Lord Shirley, did she seem elated by the consciousness of wearing a dress far more magnificent than she had ever worn; nor was her motion impeded, or her manner altered in any respect. "A common-minded girl," thought Lord Shirley, "would have looked at herself over and over again, and been full of thanks and expressions of admiration on such an occasion. Nor does she seem at all gratified at her triumph over her unkind aunt. Where there is so much dignified self-possession, there must be some mind."

"But how absurd for Miss Shirley in deep mourning to go out in a pelisse trimmed with lace!" cried Mrs. Baynton. "Surely she might stay at home till the things proper for her to wear are ready! And pray whither is Miss Shirley going?"

"To Mrs. Merle's!"

"Only to Mrs. Merle's! O then it does not signify what she wears, if I may judge of the mother's manners by the daughter's; for that young person seems to me a most low-lived creature, and no better than a female jacobin; and she really insinuated that you and I, brother, were two hard-hearted aristocrats."

"I am afraid, sister, the young lady spoke the truth; and if this is the only proof of her jacobinism, I see no ground for the charge."

"I can only say, General Shirley, that if you allow your granddaughter to keep such company, you will see cause to repent it. But you are prejudiced against every thing that I observe, therefore I shall say no more; but

this Miss Merle is not fit company for Miss Shirley."

So saying she left the room; while Catherine tremblingly awaited interrogatories from the General relative to her friend, which she knew she could not answer at all to his satisfaction, as she felt quite assured that Lucy Merle had spoken the words attributed to her, and almost in the very spirit which Mrs. Baynton suspected. But the General, seeing she was distressed, did not press the subject further. Then kindly and earnestly desiring her not to stay too long, as he did not know how to part with her, he gave her hand to Lord Shirley, and in a few moments, accompanied by Norris, they were on their way to Great George Street.

Lord Shirley (though by no means a vain man) would have been mortified had he known how little his kindness in accompanying Catherine to *one* Mrs. Merle's was appreciated by his young relation. She was told that Lord Shirley was her cousin, and he paid her the proper attention of one. It was a thing of course, and so was attention to Catherine Shirley from all young men whom she had yet seen; and she was too free from any feeling of worship for rank, to feel peculiarly grateful for common civility from a lord. But Lord Shirley was a little vexed to find that, instead of entering into conversation with him, she fell into a reverie, out of which she started only to address Norris; but, then, what she said showed such goodness of heart that his self-love forgot its murmurs.

"I am resolved, dear nurse," said Catherine, (the name she had been used to give to Norris,) "I am resolved to take the head of the table only *to-day*, to show my obedience to my grandfather's will and my grateful sense of the honour he kindly intends to do me; but after to-day I will beg and entreat him to let my aunt fill the place as usual."

"Dear me! why so, Miss Catherine?"

"Because I cannot but feel for Mrs. Baynton's mortification."

"She is such an unamiable person, I would have her mortified," said Mrs. Norris; "but I beg your pardon, my lord, for speaking so of your relation."

"And my pardon too, I hope, Norris, for she is my aunt. But indeed I pity her. We all love power; therefore we none of us like to resign it. I suspect that *voluntary* abdication has been often repented of," she added, (turning towards Lord Shirley as she spoke, as if conscious her terms might not be understood by her companion,) and this abdication is *not* voluntary. Besides, Mrs. Baynton is a much more proper person to regulate the family and sit at the head of the table than I am."

"You must do as you please, Miss Shirley," cried Norris; "but I am sure she does not deserve any consideration from you, for I am confident she cannot abide you."

"Nor ever will, if I am always to be the means of mortification to her. My lord, if the General wishes his sister to live on good terms with me, and to like me, is he right in thus inflicting wounds on her self-love through me?"

"Certainly not," replied Lord Shirley. But he could say no more; for as the carriage turned into George Street, poor Catherine, recollecting when she saw the house of Mrs. Merle the feelings which impelled her from it, to meet, (as she now found,) a home and a second parent, felt her long-suspended emotion recur in full force; and throwing herself on Mrs. Norris's bosom, she sobbed convulsively and aloud.

When they stopped at the door, Lord Shirley took her passive hand, and told her they were arrived, and her friends waiting at the door to receive her. Catherine instantly started up; and as soon as the door was open, she did not wait for Lord Shirley's assistance; but, springing out alone she was in a moment hanging on the arm of the agitated Lucy, and in another moment had disappeared with her into her own chamber.

Catherine forgot, in the hurry of the moment, to introduce her noble companion; but Norris had recollection enough to tell Mrs. Merle that Catherine's cousin Lord Shirley had kindly chosen to accompany her.

"Oh! that's a lord, is it?" said Mrs. Merle, hiding her pleasure of having such a visiter, under a sort of contemptuous smile as she whispered Mrs. Norris; while Norris, knowing her own place, told Mrs. Merle she would wait her young lady's further orders in the kitchen, and instantly left the room.

"Pray sit down, my lord," said Mrs. Merle; "though we are plain folk, and not used to such company; but here's a chair that is clean at least." And Lord Shirley, almost abashed by her earnest and inquisitive gaze, sat down. "It is cold weather, my lord, and coals are so dear one can hardly afford to buy them; and indeed so is every thing else. It does not signify to such as you, my lord, who live on the fat of the land; but we poor folks find it a dear country to live in, and I am sure I for one shall not rest till I get out of it."

"If you are dissatisfied with your own country, madam, you will be quite right in leaving it," gravely replied Lord Shirley.

"Pray, my lord, is there any news?"

"No public news, I believe madam, since the late glorious engagement."

"Oh! What after all is taking a few ships? Will it bring down the taxes, and pay the national debt? Answer me that, my lord."

"Excuse me, madam, I am no politician."

"No! and yet form a part of our legislature?"

"At least, madam, I *rarely* talk politics willingly, and *never* to ladies."

Still the incorrigible Mrs. Merle went on; "But I am not a lady, my lord; I am only a woman, my lord; and there is a great difference, I take it, between a woman and a lady."

"Some little, I fancy," replied Lord Shirley, half smiling.

"But now really, my lord, between friends, what good will all this powder and shot do to the nation at large?—And as to harm, why, I suppose we shall have a new batch of peers; and I am sure we have enough of those gentry already."

Lord Shirley bowed, and smiled. But thinking it fine fun to speak her mind to a lord, she continued, nothing daunted, though there was one thing wanting to her gratification; and that was, that an acquaintance or friend should drop in to flatter her vanity, by seeing her with a lord for her guest; and her pride, by hearing how she *ran the rig* on his lordship.

"Yes, my lord; your lordship's a very good sort of a gentleman yourself, for aught I know to the contrary, (and that she thought was being very genteel and civil to him;) but, dear me! what good do so *many* do?—There is some great lady (I do not remember great folks' names) who is said to have said, she could not now spit out of a window without spitting on a lord."

"Indeed, madam!" cried Lord Shirley; "it is a pity this great lady, your sympathizing friend on this subject, should be restrained by any consideration from indulging in the delicate custom you mention."

"My friend! my lord?—No, indeed; I have no friends among great folks—I am not so"—fond of them, she was going to add, but she had politeness enough to check herself;—"and I suppose the lady did not mean *literally* that she used to spit."

"I hope not, madam, for the sake of the privileged orders to which you say she belongs."

Mrs. Merle was going to say something very shrewd and severe, in her opinion, and probably on the privileged orders, as she was looking arch and winking her eye, when the door opened, and Catherine entered, followed by Lucy Merle. Lucy's face was so disfigured by crying, that Lord Shirley, though struck with the graceful dignity of her tall figure, so unlike the vulgarity of the mother's appearance, could not form any judgment whether she was handsome or not.

But though Lord Shirley's curiosity to know with what sort of women Catherine had been associating, had thus been amply gratified during his long tête-à-tête with Mrs. Merle, still he was delighted at her return; and it was with no small satisfaction he saw her enter the room, laden with a small cabinet, which had been her father's, and was therefore now her own. In this cabinet she knew that he kept his most precious letters, &c.; and on a sealed paper in one of the unlocked drawers was written—"*To be opened, in case of my death, by my beloved daughter, Catherine Shirley.*" Catherine had consequently opened the paper, and found that it contained the key of the fastened drawers. The contemplation of the melancholy task which awaited her in looking over these papers, had so completely depressed and absorbed her, that she scarcely heard Mrs. Merle's congratulations, or her exclamations of admiration at the beauty of her pelisse; nor had she observed her while she stroked the velvet, examined the lace, and, patting it down, exclaimed "Well, dear Miss Shirley, now you are dressed as you ought to be."

"My lord," said Catherine, abruptly turning to Lord Shirley, "you know my grandfather better than I do; do you think he would object to Lucy Merle's coming to me for two or three days, if her mother would give leave?"

"Which I would do most readily," answered Mrs. Merle; "for I know the girl will do nothing but mope when you are gone."

"Yes, certainly," replied Lord Shirley. "Why should you think he would not?"

"Because I was afraid that he might be hurt at my seeming to give so decided a preference to my old associates."

"But can any thing be more natural?"

"No.—Still might it not give the General unnecessary pain, by reminding him why he and I are as yet strangers to each other, and those affections bestowed on friends which ought to have belonged to relations?"

"I honour the kindness which influences you, dear Miss Shirley," said the earl; "but I think your fear of reminding the General unnecessary. Besides, surely you have an undoubted right on all occasions to consult your own wishes, and to think of yourself first."

"But I was taught never to think of myself first," replied Catherine, with quickness.

"Then you were well and singularly taught," returned Lord Shirley—while Catherine's uplifted eye seemed to direct its grateful appeal to the spirits of her lost parents.

"It was my consciousness," she continued, "how eagerly I desired Lucy Merle's company, that made me fear my wishes might blind me improperly to the comfort of another; but you think I may risk it, spite of my aunt's prejudices. Indeed I have an excuse, if one be necessary—Lucy would assist me in making the rest of my mourning."

"No; that will not be suffered, I am sure, Miss Shirley," he hastily replied; "the first and most fashionable mantuamaker must be employed for that purpose."

"My lord, I make all my own things."

"And it was a virtue in you so to do when

your means of expenditure were small; but now, in the heiress of General Shirley, such a saving would be a vice."

"What, my lord! if by such saving I enabled myself to give more to those who want?"

"But you will now be able to afford to give to trades-people their just employments, and relieve distresses too."

"Still you must allow, that if I had the wealth of Crœsus, and I could by means of a little industrious economy increase my power to do good, I ought to do it."

"But, in this case, you seem to forget that in encouraging the industry of an industrious mantuamaker you do good. Have you no feeling for the profits deserved by working trades-people? Can you feel only for the indigent?"

"My lord," replied Catherine, thoughtfully, but respectfully, "I must consider this subject before I reply. I wish to act right; but it must be according to my own convictions, when I shall have thoroughly weighed the suggestions of those wiser than myself. For let me assure you, that I shall always cheerfully give up a habit to my grandfather's wishes, but a principle never.... But I am trespassing greatly on your time and patience," she added. Then having told Lucy she should hear from her in an hour or two, she kissed her most affectionately, while Lucy was forced to turn away to hide her strong emotion. She then gracefully approached Mrs. Merle, and, kissing her cheek, said,—"Though you were wrong, very wrong, in persisting as you did the other night, yet I am sorry I occasioned you such alarm; but the frenzy of the moment must be my excuse—and—"

"O dear! O dear!" vociferated Mrs. Merle, sobbing violently—"I know I was wrong, very wrong,—but it was all along of my temper, which is, you know, Miss Shirley, none of the best in the world; and no one but such a sweet-tempered creature as you could have borne it so well."

"Don't talk thus," said Catherine, gently. "I shall never forget the safe and respectable protection you have afforded me, nor your claims on me from the connexion with my poor mother. Remember, you will always find a friend in me." Here her voice faltered; and once more saluting the sobbing Mrs. Merle, she wrung Lucy's hand, and, assisted by Lord Shirley, followed Mrs. Norris into the carriage.

Nearly the whole way to New-street, Catherine covered her face in her handkerchief, overcome by the thought of having for ever left that home where she last saw her father and received the last token of his affection; till recollecting that this was indeed one of those selfish indulgences which she had declared against, she apologized to Lord Shirley for her silence, and tried to talk. But the earl was not more disposed to converse than she was, for he was thinking over all he had seen and heard of Catherine during the morning. He had himself witnessed her candour and generosity relative to her aunt; and he had heard the self-condemned Mrs. Merle declare, that no temper but one as sweet as Catherine's could have borne with the acidity of hers.

So far so good.—Still he was not quite satisfied with all that had passed. In the first place, he had found Mrs. Merle a vulgar, ignorant, prejudiced and forward woman; and who can touch pitch without being defiled? Surely not such a young creature as Catherine Shirley! In the next place, her excessive intimacy with Lucy Merle was not consistent, he thought, with the proper pride of a girl of family. And, in the third place, had not the speech concerning voluntary abdication an air of pedantry?—and had not the declaration, that though she would give up a habit, she would not give up a principle, to oblige General Shirley, an appearance of decision and free-will neither amiable nor proper in so young a woman? But, after all, were not the lips that thus spoke, the most beautiful lips possible? and was not the head, which was slightly thrown back as if in conscious loftiness of mind, as she uttered her determination, more gracefully set on than any one he had ever seen? And, in short, taking her physical and her moral qualities together, was not his new-found relative, Catherine Shirley, a very uncommon and interesting being? And had she not strongly excited his curiosity to know still more of her? But did she feel any apparent curiosity to know more of him?—of him, the desire of all female hearts, and the delight of all female eyes, as his flatterers had called him?

No,—his vanity could not deceive him on that score. He saw that old Norris had much greater charms for her than he had; and he was sure that, if she were sitting between her and Lucy Merle, he would almost have been unheeded by her.—Yet Lord Shirley was reckoned, and perhaps was, the handsomest and most agreeable man of the day.

But while Catherine is gone to dress for dinner, and, probably, to look over some of the contents of the cabinet; and while Lord Shirley is returned home for the former purpose, before he takes his seat at the General's table—it may be proper for me to give some account of Captain Shirley—of his amiable wife—and of the events which led our heroine under the care of Mrs. Merle.

CHAPTER V.

Captain Shirley was the only child of General Shirley, by a lady born of noble English

parents whom distressed circumstances had occasioned to emigrate to America; and there General Shirley, when a lieutenant in the army, fell in love with and married her.

Captain Shirley, his only child by that marriage, was devoted to his profession, and felt that well-principled love for it which leads a man to fit himself to be an ornament to it by the study of naval tactics. His father had wished him to be a soldier; but finding his inclinations fixed on the sea, he forbore to oppose them; and the young William became a naval officer.

At this time the General, then only Colonel Shirley, was constantly going to different quarters with his regiment, consequently had no house in London. Captain Shirley, therefore, then only a lieutenant, whenever he was obliged to visit the metropolis, was forced to go to lodgings. The lodgings to which he always went were kept by a respectable person, the widow of a reputable shopkeeper in Oxford-street, of the name of Morland, who was glad to add to her little income by letting part of the very excellent house which her husband possessed, and left her, in Sackville-street, Piccadilly. Mrs. Morland had an only daughter, the last surviving child of seven; and when William Shirley first became her lodger, Catherine Morland was only fourteen, and he considered her merely in the light of an agreeable and attentive child; but the next time he returned from a cruise, he beheld her, though in age only sixteen, matured into a fine lovely woman, in appearance approaching twenty.

Catherine Morland, unconscious of the difference in her person, or rather unconscious that the difference ought to make any change in her behaviour, came forward to meet her kind friend with her usual affectionate familiarity; but a conscious feeling, of which honour, perhaps, was the unconscious impulse, prompted William Shirley to return her eager welcome with kindness, but full of restraining respect. However, the kindness was wholly lost on the astonished and mortified girl, and the respect, or coldness, as she termed it, was all that she observed; and hastily leaving the room, she retired to weep over the altered manner, and consequently altered feelings of her dear William Shirley. But Mrs. Morland saw in him no change; his manner to her was as kind as ever, — still, she thought him pensive and absent; and after a long reverie he suddenly exclaimed, "How Catherine is grown! She is now quite a woman — ay, and a very lovely young woman, too! Mrs. Morland, Mrs. Morland! you must not keep a lodging-house!"

The poor woman looked aghast at these alarming words; and before she recovered herself, William Shirley, pressing her hand affectionately, told her he would talk further to her on that subject, a subject he had much at heart, and left the house.

"What is the matter, my dear child?" said Mrs. Morland, on seeing Catherine enter the room with her eyes swollen with tears.

"O nothing, mamma; only — only I think Mr. Shirley is—is very odd."

"I think so too, my dear," replied her mother, thoughtfully; "but I dare say when he comes back again he will explain all."

"Explain! What! Explain why he looked so coldly, and took my hand so coldly when I ran up to him so glad, so *very* glad to see him! How can he explain that, I wonder?"

Her mother sighed, but said nothing; and felt very impatient for Mr. Shirley's return. But that return was delayed so long that Mrs. Morland insisted on Catherine's going to bed, and, dismissing the maid, sat up as usual herself.

During his walks in the morning, and his solitary dinner that afternoon, William Shirley had been thinking on the danger which would be incurred by so fine a girl as Catherine Morland, if exposed to the addresses of her mother's lodgers. Of his own honour he felt secure; but some man equally honourable in appearance as himself might gain her unsuspecting heart, and take an unworthy if not criminal advantage of it; he therefore resolved to talk very seriously to the mother, and convince her that she must either take some other method of increasing her income, or send Catherine out in some situation to gain her own livelihood. Accordingly, when he returned home and found Mrs. Morland alone, he entered very fully into the subject; and the grateful and alarmed parent resolved that she would give Catherine every advantage in her power to qualify her for a governess in a private family, or an assistant-teacher in a boarding-school.

"It will cost a great deal of money to do that," said William Shirley, thoughtfully.

"Indeed it will," replied Mrs. Morland; "but I can sell out some of my little property in the funds."

"You shall do no such thing," said Shirley; "I have a legacy of a few hundreds to receive, and part of it cannot be employed better than in aiding a good and affectionate parent in preserving her daughter from danger, and giving her the means of independence. Whenever you or Catherine are rich, you shall repay me with interest."

It was long that night before the joyfully-agitated mother could close her tearful eyes, or cease her earnest prayers for blessings on the head of her young benefactor; while he was blessed already in the sweetly soothing consciousness of having served two, and perhaps saved one deserving fellow-creature.

When the mother met her daughter in the morning, she caught her in her arms, and

wept over her for some minutes without speaking; and to the alarmed Catherine's inquiries she only answered—"O that excellent young man! that blessed William Shirley!"

At length, however, she explained herself to the blushing Catherine, who, though flattered to think she was judged so attractive by Shirley as to be in danger of being too much admired, felt indignant that he should suppose her principles could be corrupted, and afflicted to see that he could so gladly and readily afford her the means to leave the house which he so often inhabited; but at last she learnt to appreciate justly the value of his advice and his bounty. And when he returned, her manner was as respectful, and, she flattered herself, as cold as his own.

This change induced a greater cordiality of manner in him; and he contrived to excuse the way in which he met her, and which he saw had wounded her pride, by attributing it to an involuntary feeling of respect and surprise at seeing the person whom he had left a child suddenly grown into a tall woman; and Catherine began to fancy that the manner so wounding to her feelings was gratifying to her vanity.

Every thing was soon arranged for the education of Catherine for a teacher. Her fine and ductile voice was put under the tuition of a first-rate master, and another was hired to teach her thoroughbass and to understand music as a science. Besides, she also learnt French and Italian, and had a female opera-dancer to give her the best instructions in dancing and walking. Shirley learnt Italian at the same time she did; and the emulation thus excited in Catherine made her much quicker in learning Italian than in perfecting herself in French; and Shirley every day congratulated himself on having been the means of cultivating the talents of a being so eminently endowed.

In about nine months Shirley was forced to go to sea again, and Catherine's exertions flagged. But recollecting that when he returned he would expect to find she had made a great progress in all her accomplishments, she resumed her labours; and when she saw him again he was indeed gratified by the improvement which she had made.

"But it is time," said Shirley, "that you should seek for a situation."

"So my mother says," replied Catherine turning very pale; "but——"

"But you do not think so."

"No, I think I may dismiss my masters; but I wish to practise some months longer at home."

These months Shirley knew he should pass in the house, and he suspected that this, unknown to herself, was the true reason of Catherine's desired delay. Perhaps his "wish was father to the thought," and William Shirley feared so too; for it was so *natural* that a young man should love an accomplished girl who owed her accomplishments to him. Still, whatever he felt, he resolved to confine it all to his own bosom; for his own pride of birth and that of his father forbade him to make Catherine Morland his wife, and his own sense of honour equally forbade him to endeavour, or even wish, to seduce that innocence himself, which he had so laudably laboured to preserve from the attacks of others.

"I will immediately inquire for a situation for her," said he to himself. And having succeeded in his endeavours, that day three months was fixed on for Catherine Morland's quitting the maternal roof, and trying her fortune under the roof of a stranger. In the meanwhile Shirley insisted on Catherine's masters being continued, and he resumed his study of the Italian with her.

To the dreaded time of Catherine's departure there were now only two months; and as he was so soon to see her no more, or only for a few hours in a twelvemonth perhaps, William Shirley thought there could be no danger either to him or her, if he stayed at home as much as possible to enjoy her society, and assist her, when her masters were gone, in going over the lessons which they left. The consequence was, forced gaiety when they met before a third person, reserve and silence when they chanced to be alone; and the colour evidently became faint on the once florid cheek and ruby lip of Catherine Morland. Still she laughed, she danced, she sung, she played; and every one but her mother and William Shirley believed her gaiety real; sometimes, indeed, the latter felt piqued at her self-command, and almost feared that her good spirits were not feigned.

"However," thought he, "the dreaded moment will soon come, and the trial will be over; we shall part, and time and absence will restore us both to our senses; if, indeed, as I now begin to doubt, her heart shares the feelings of mine."

Catherine's mother saw her daughter's struggles, and felt for them; but very judiciously endeavoured to give her courage to proceed in them, by laughing at the folly of lovesick girls, and describing William Shirley as having once declared he should despise a woman whose heart surrendered itself without long and earnest wooing.

"He shall not despise me," said she mentally; and so strenuous were her subsequent efforts to conceal her feelings, that Shirley was completely deceived, and believed that he alone would be the sufferer in the approaching separation. This conviction had a visible effect on his temper; he could not in his heart acquit Catherine of ingratitude, and she too, deceived in her turn, thought it impossible a man could love the woman to whom he occasionally spoke so pettishly and unkindly.

The day of separation at length arrived; and

during the breakfast meal, which Shirley took that day with Catherine and her mother, out of compliment to the former, he could not sit still a moment, but was always going in and out of the room to find up all his books, and the things belonging to him; some of which he insisted upon it, a servant girl that was going away that day must have purloined.

"How strange!" thought Catherine, "that such trifles should have such power to vex him, when I am going away! Oh! if he cared for me at all, could he thus be susceptible of petty vexations!"

The coach now drove up which was to convey Catherine to the place of her destination; and while it was loading with her trunks, Shirley came into the room in great agitation, declaring he had lost a pocket-comb, and he was sure the girl had taken it.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Morland, "surely it was not worth taking!"

"No, it was worth nothing to anybody but me; and I would not have parted with it for worlds, for it was my poor mother's gift; and though it had few teeth remaining in it, I valued it beyond any of my possessions! My handkerchiefs and shirts the girl was welcome to, but this—"

"I will go and see for it myself," said Mrs. Morland; "perhaps it is dropped down somewhere."

When alone with Catherine, Shirley still kept on inveighing against the girl, and declared he would tax her with the theft, and if she denied it, get a warrant and take her to Bow street. At this moment his eye glanced towards Catherine, and he beheld her, nearly fainting, grasp at a chair for support; and running towards her, he clasped her in his arms, and leaned her pale cheek against his shoulder.

"Mr. Shirley," said she in a faint voice, "promise me not to say any thing to the poor girl; for I 'll confess all, rather than let another suffer for my fault." Here she paused, while Shirley, pleased yet pained, awaited the confession which his beating heart anticipated.

"I—I took the comb," resumed Catherine, hiding her face with her hand, as she forced herself from the encircling arm of Shirley.

"You! Catherine?"

"Yes, I—it was such a poor old comb, that I, who knew not its intrinsic value, thought you would not miss or care for it. And—and it was a memorial of you—and now only say you don't despise me, and I shall depart in peace."

"Depart!" cried Shirley, no longer master of himself. "No, Catherine, no; never shall we be parted more! While I thought I suffered alone, I could be silent and self-subdued; but now that I see our separation will torture you also,—O! Catherine!" Here he caught the agitated girl to his bosom. To be brief, the coach was dismissed, the lady informed that Miss Morland's mother could not part with her; and, spite of his love for his father, and his pride of birth, in one month from the day on which he found himself beloved, William Shirley received at Paddington church (to which village Catherine and her mother removed) the hand of the woman whom he loved dearer than his own life.

Soon after their marriage Shirley was summoned to his ship, of which in a few months after he returned the master and commander. But his joy at this rise, was damped by his wife's giving birth to a son which died a few weeks after. Nor could he be at times unconscious how terribly he had blasted his father's hopes, by marrying as he had done; for the General had lately become possessor of a very large fortune, and he himself would be, on the death of a relation who had no children, heir to a barony; but, though conscious that every day that he continued to conceal his fault increased its magnitude, he could not prevail on himself to write to his father and implore his forgiveness; nor could Mrs. Shirley herself urge him to a step which might draw down on him the malediction of a father, and lead him in the bitterness of his remorse to hate her as the cause of his disobedience. Thus year after year wore away; while Mrs. Shirley, though conscious she was an innocent wife, appeared to her neighbours to be a contented mistress; and her respectable mother, in the village where they lived, was looked upon in no better light than the complaisant friend of her daughter.

It was not often, however, that Shirley, when become a post-captain, visited them in the country; he usually summoned them to town, as the metropolis was better for the purposes of concealment than a village.

But when Catherine his daughter had reached the age of thirteen, he was so struck with her beauty, that with all a parent's pride he longed to present her to his father, and introduce his child to that rank of life to which she was born. A proud and weak fear lest the beauty of his wife should not be thought sufficient to excuse his having married a woman so inferior to himself in birth, was one reason why he had so long kept his marriage concealed; for though to his partial eye she appeared, if not the handsomest, the most attractive woman he had ever seen; and though in talents, variety of accomplishments, and in virtues, he had never seen her equal, he dreaded lest others should not see her with the same eyes; and he also dreaded that the implied disappointment of his father and friends in her charms and merits should operate on himself to the disadvantage of his wife.

He had once resolved to disclose his secret to his amiable cousin Lord Shirley; just then become the arbiter of fashions, whose word was law in all decisions relative to female beauty. But the terror lest, when he presented his wife to him, he should read sur-

prise and disappointment in his eye, still kept him silent; till parental pride came in aid of filial duty and repentant filial affection; and he wrote a letter to the general, owning his marriage, and earnestly and humbly imploring leave to present to him an adored wife and a most lovely daughter.

It was not only the action itself, but the long concealment of it, which enraged the General; and he wrote a letter which expressed only too well the bitterness of his soul. His son received it as he ought, and wrote again and again in humble terms to deprecate his wrath; and the General's heart softened towards him; but the representations of his proud second wife and prouder sister made him still vindictive towards Mrs. Shirley; and he offered to receive him and his child into his presence and his favour, but vowed never to see or acknowledge the woman who had duped him into a disgraceful marriage.

"This is conclusive!" cried Shirley, in a transport of rage, and throwing the letter into the lap of his wife, "and he has no more a son. What! does he think me void of affection and of honour—ay, and of intellect and feeling! Does he think that I could have loved a woman capable of duping me into marriage! If he were not my father, I would—"

"But, he is your father, dearest William," cried Catherine, "and we have offended him; therefore it is right that we should humble ourselves before him."

"We have done so; but never shall we do so again, my Catherine! No, I will let this haughty General Shirley know, that I am prouder of my wife and of her virtues, than of all the boasted race of ancestors on whose account I am commanded to be a villain!"

"Oh, my kind, my generous love!" cried his grateful wife.

"Generous! Why, Catherine, do you think I have any merit in not resigning you?"

Let this suffice to show the faithful and devoted love which Shirley felt for his wife. Let it also account for his subsequent conduct, when the sudden death of her mother, and the self-upbraidings of her heart for having been the means of estranging her husband from his father, preyed incessantly upon her spirits, and brought on a decline, to which in early life she had discovered a tendency.

I will not attempt to paint the agony with which Shirley watched beside her fevered pillow, and viewed the gradual progress of decay. But to her the consciousness of approaching death was cheered by the hope that her death would restore the son to the father.

"Shirley," she cried, "I trust that I have made our child all the amends I could for having given her a mother so humbly born;—I could not give her noble blood, but I have given her I trust noble sentiments, and just principles of action; for I have taught her to own no arbiter on earth but her own conscience, strengthened and enlightened by faith and prayer, together with a firm reliance on the merits of her Redeemer, and the goodness of her Creator."

"You have done still more," replied Shirley, in a faltering voice; "you have given her your own spotless example.—But must I lose you!—No, no, it can not, shall not be."

"It will—it must—" she replied in a faint and hurried tone; "but I have one great consolation in dying; namely, the assurance that with me all obstacles to your reconciliation with your father will be at an end. Yes, when I am gone he will forgive you."—As she feebly uttered this, a sweet smile played upon her lips, and in another instant her distracted husband was convinced that these words and that smile were her last.

Need I paint the anguish of the husband and the daughter?—But it is necessary that I should describe the effect so different to what she intended they should have—which her last words and wishes had on the heart of her husband. For, though Shirley had witnessed, and even joined in the last rites of religion, when administered to his dying wife,—of that religion which teaches forgiveness of injuries as indispensable and necessary to our own forgiveness,—still, such was the perverted nature of his sorrow, that he had no relief but in venting it in execrations of his father's cruelty, and in resolutions *never* to forgive it.

"No—" he delighted to exclaim, "the father who rejected *her*, shall never have the comfort of receiving *me*; and I shall have pleasure in rejecting with disdain the tardy and solitary forgiveness which he will no doubt offer me."

He did not long expect it in vain. The General, as soon as he saw the death of Mrs. Shirley in the paper, wrote a letter blotted with tears to his son, conjuring him to hasten to him with his daughter, and take up his future abode at his house.—It was then with a savage grief, and an indulgence of very bitter feelings, that William Shirley sat down to write to his father, rejecting for ever all terms of reconciliation with him, and declaring that, when he disdained to receive his angel wife, he for ever deprived himself of his son.

This duty to the memory of his wife (as he called it) accomplished, he consigned his daughter to the care of an odd-tempered but respectable woman, whose mother was the daughter of Morland's father-in-law by a first marriage. This woman was Mrs. Merle, to whose husband Shirley had lent considerable sums of money, without even a prospect of regaining them.

But Captain Shirley knew that, now her husband was dead, in Mrs. Merle his daughter would find at least a watchful guardian; and as every one who had known, lived, or been connected with his wife, had a charm for him, Shirley felt his preference of Mrs. Merle,

as his child's guardian, grow stronger every hour. Besides, he knew that Mrs. Merle and Lucy were struggling with undeserved indigence, the result of Mr. Merle's imprudence; and though he had suffered considerably by the father and the husband, his generous heart yearned to benefit the daughter and the mother.

Captain Shirley had a small independent property, left him by an aunt, and he had some prize-money; but his means were not at all proportionate to his generous spirit; and when he placed Catherine under Mrs. Merle's care, it was with great difficulty he could allow her what he thought sufficient to enable them to reside in London, and Catherine enough to pay for her masters and her dress.—Still, it was necessary that Mrs. Merle should live in London, that Catherine might have the best masters; and having seen the former settled there, and his daughter under her protection, Captain Shirley set off on a ramble over the British isles; then, when tired of wandering, he returned to London, took an affectionate leave of Catherine, and volunteered on board a ship in the fleet.

Meanwhile, such was Mrs. Merle's good management, and such the habits of industry and economy which had been taught Catherine by her mother, that the want of money was never felt by either of them; and while Mrs. Merle contrived to save a few pounds every year to send to her husband in America, Catherine had always a little hoard for the wants of the deserving indigent, whom it was Lucy's care to find out, and make known to her richer friend.

We have already seen, that at the end of three years from the death of his wife, Captain Shirley fell with glory in the defence of his country. But I have now to relate, that his long-suppressed tenderness towards his father returned in all its original force, when orders for a general engagement the next day were issued, and he recollected that before that day's sun should set, he might be past giving or receiving forgiveness. The thought affected him even to tears; and giving way to all the native softness of his heart, he sat down and wrote the following letter to the General:—

"My dear, dear father,—Orders are given for a general engagement to-morrow—and I, to whom life, since the loss of her whom if you had known you must have loved, has been little better than a burthen, may be led perhaps by my feelings, as well as my duty, into the thickest of the battle, and I may fall before the fight is ended. Then, take my forgiveness, which till now I have so sturdily withheld. And oh! grant me yours, I beseech you;—first, for my disobedience; secondly, for my late callousness to your affectionate advances! Oh! my father!—when one finds oneself perhaps on the very brink of eternity, and of final judgment, oneself, how poor, how weak, how wicked, appear all earthly enmities!—enmity towards a parent too!—Terrible idea!—and at this moment, at this thought, your kindnesses, your doting fondness, your care of me during a sickly infancy, and your indulgence to my riper years, all crowd to my remembrance, and my brow is covered with drops of agony at the consciousness of the misery I have occasioned you!

"Forgive me—oh! forgive me! and prove you do so, by taking to your home and to your heart my orphan girl! Enclosed is her address.

"You will find her worthy of the angel who bore her; and love her not the less for the resemblance she bears to me! If I fall, I have given orders for this to be forwarded to you. If I live, we shall meet again!

"Farewell! farewell!

"Your repentant and affectionate

"WILLIAM SHIRLEY."

CHAPTER VI.

BUT to return to the dinner at General Shirley's, for which Catherine and Lord Shirley were gone to prepare when I began the story of the General's unfortunate son.

The General, his sister, and Lord Shirley, were assembled in the dinner-room when Catherine made her appearance. Her afternoon dress displayed the beauty of her form and of her arms to great advantage; but her face was swollen even to disfigurement by recent and incessant crying; and her every motion and gesture seemed to betray the abandonment of calm but settled sorrow.

The General's attention had hitherto been somewhat taken from himself by the singular introduction of Catherine to his knowledge, and by the activity of thought concerning her which that introduction had given birth to. But he now began to feel the languor of hopeless regret; and when he saw her grief-disfigured countenance, he felt only too forcibly that his son's death was as present to him as ever.

As soon as she saw him, she went up to him, and throwing her arms affectionately round him, laid her head on his shoulder, while a tear trickled down her cheek. But recovering herself before the servant came to announce dinner, Catherine gracefully withdrew herself from the General's embrace, and curtsied coldly to her aunt, but still more coldly to the earl,—giving him at the same time a look that almost expressed aversion.

In the morning he had felt great mortification in being forced to own to himself that Catherine felt perfectly indifferent towards him. But if his interpretation of her look and manner in the evening was just, willingly

would he have now exchanged her present feeling for that of indifference. Yet, how could he have offended her? And why so unusually kind to the General, and so unusually cold and haughty towards him? Whatever was the reason of this change, it gave him pain; and he was relieved, rather than distressed, when the General desired him to lead his sister, while he should follow with the new *maîtresse de la maison.*

"Did you hear that?" whispered the deposed queen as she leaned on the earl's arm. "To be displaced by such a chit, too! What can she know of sitting at the head of a table?"

But Catherine, as if used to the situation, took her seat without any embarrassment, and helped and attended to her guests with all the ease of a woman of fashion; except that, as usual, whenever she moved or spoke, a colour brilliant as the hue of carmine mounted from the bottom of her cheeks to the rest of her face, forming a beautiful and striking contrast to the usually transparent paleness of her face. But as soon as the emotion, from whatever cause, had subsided, her cheek lost its colour, and on her lips alone crimson held its unvarying station. In vain, during the meal, did Mrs. Baynton endeavour to discover a fault in the behaviour of Catherine, whether as a carver, a helper, or a president.

Lord Shirley was a no less attentive observer; and had it not been for the constantly mantling blush before mentioned, his fastidiousness would have led him to pronounce her too much at her ease for her time of life; especially, too, as he was not a little piqued by the continued coldness and stateliness of her manner to him.—There was little eaten and nothing said during the meal. The General and Catherine had no appetite, from sorrow; the earl, from a mixture of alarm and pique; and Mrs. Baynton, from a violent fit of ill-humour at being displaced by her niece, without having it in her power to declare that her niece was unfit to succeed her.

Shortly after the desert was served, Catherine asked her aunt if it would be agreeable to her to retire; and, having received a nod of assent, she rose; when a servant brought in a letter sealed, and delivered it to the General.

"That is my poor father's hand," exclaimed Catherine, glancing her eye over the letter; then, dreading to see the agony which she expected the sight of his lost son's posthumous address to him would occasion her grandfather to experience, she hastily left the room, regardless that she walked before Mrs. Baynton.

This negligence was an affront not to be pardoned; and, instead of repairing with her niece into the sitting-room, the enraged lady went up into her own room to complain to her complaisant abigail, how ill her new-found and conceited niece had behaved to her.

But Catherine scarcely noticed her absence; for she was too much engrossed by thinking what that letter contained. The increased affection in her manner to the General, was the consequence of reading his letters to her father, inviting him to come with his daughter and reside with him. The first letter failed to move her heart towards him, because it expressed no regret at having refused to see her mother; but the next letter, which her father in the paroxysm of his first feelings had never opened, but had deposited in the cabinet, called forth the tenderest pity towards the suffering parent; for in that letter he execrated his past cruelty; said he would give worlds to recall his daughter-in-law to life, and to receive her to his house and to his heart. And as Catherine felt assured that, if her father had read this letter, it would have had a conciliatory effect on his feelings, and would have led him perhaps to the presence of his father, the idea of the General as her mother's enemy faded gradually from her mind; and when she next beheld his grief-worn countenance, she could not help hastening to him in the manner above described.

The cabinet contained also other reminiscences of both her parents, which had entirely subverted her newly assumed composure, and sent her down with every mark of sorrow in her appearance. She was still pacing the room, but in oppressive thought, wholly unconscious of the lapse of time, when the gentlemen entered; and she saw evident marks of deep emotion in the face of Lord Shirley.

The General endeavoured to speak, but could not. But on her offering to take the letter he held in his hand, he snatched it away from her, saying, "No; this is not for your eye *yet*, my love; it has nearly broken my heart, and could have no good effect on yours. See, it has been too much for poor Lionel there. Still it has been a cordial to my heart, as it proves how earnestly he wished you to be, in case of his decease, under my protection."

Catherine, though disappointed in not seeing the letter, acquiesced in the decision. "But why, (thought she,) should Lord Shirley be thus affected?" and her eye, when it turned on him, insensibly lost some of its sternness.

At this moment the General, looking at him, exclaimed, "Oh, Lionel! had I but listened to your wise, benevolent, and disinterested advice, at this moment, perhaps, both my son and his wife would have been alive and happy, and here!"

"Dear sir!" cried Lord Shirley in a hoarse voice, "you must not feel and talk thus."

"Not feel thus!—not feel, when you know that I was a hard-hearted obstinate old fool, and not all your repeated and eloquent entreaties, both by word of mouth and in writing,

could prevail on me to receive my son's wife as well as my son to my forgiveness!"

"What!—Is it possible? Could Lord Shirley,—did he,—was he the advocate for my poor mother!" cried Catherine, her whole face lighting up with pleasure and surprise, though tears trembled in her eyelids.

"To be sure he was—and I can show you his letters; for I kept them—I kept them to his honour and my disgrace!"

"Then *why*, *why* was this written?" said Catherine, eagerly taking a letter from her pocket, and showing it to Lord Shirley. It was from Mrs. Baynton to her nephew; and after pages of reviling it added, "And I assure you that that admirable, sensible young man, the Earl Shirley, the head of your house, agrees with me in all I have said, and will do his utmost to prevent my brother's receiving either you or your wife."

Amazement, mixed with indignation, deprived Lord Shirley, at first, of utterance. But at length he exclaimed, "Never, in any respect, did I authorize Mrs. Baynton to think these sentiments mine; and all I can remember to have said in reply to her violent invectives was, 'I own, madam, I wish my cousin had married a woman of his own rank, because I am no friend to unequal marriages;' and on these words, for I left her soon after, she must have founded what I consider as a very heavy charge against me—that of wishing to foment discord; and contrary, as I hope the General will convince you, both to my principles and my practice, in this instance as in every other."

"Oh! I am convinced, quite convinced, already," cried the enthusiastic Catherine, seizing Lord Shirley's hand between both hers; then, looking up in his serious face with a sort of supplicating smile, which he had thought her features incapable of, she added, "Lord Shirley, dear Lord Shirley! do pray forgive the resentment which I was betrayed into by this wicked letter; and pray forget—but, no, I hope you did not remark all the cold haughty looks which I gave you during dinner-time."

Lord Shirley was so taken by surprise, so fluttered by the continued affectionate pressure of her hands, that he could not recollect himself sufficiently even to return it; and it was with much embarrassment that he at last articulated, "It is impossible, that any one of your looks, Miss Shirley, can remain unnoticed; and I own they gave me exquisite pain, for which even this frank and kind acknowledgment can scarcely make me amends;—but at length you do me justice, and thus let me still further repay myself for the misery you have occasioned."

So saying, he pressed her hand to his lips; and a smile of meaning passed for one moment across those of the General; for Lord Shirley sighed as he relinquished her hand. Catherine only blushed—but that she did every moment.

"But, hush! here comes my aunt," said Catherine; "and I conjure you say not a word on the subject of her misrepresentation. Pray remember, my dear grandfather, and you, my dear cousin," (and she smiled while she said so, an epithet she used, to try to make Lord Shirley forget her past coldness,) "that it is my wish to make my aunt my friend, which I can never do while I am the means of procuring her severe reproofs or taunting sarcasms."

"Make her your friend! She ought to be your friend ready-made, if she felt properly and naturally," exclaimed the General.

"I am not quite sure of that, according to natural feelings; unless by natural feelings," observed Lord Shirley, "you mean the ties of blood; for the lady's dislike of a young and lovely great-niece who is wholly a stranger to her, and whose coming into the family deprives her both of consequence and authority, would appear to me, especially in a woman not remarkable for her fine temper, a very natural feeling."

"Well, well," said the General, "natural or unnatural, I heartily pity you, my poor child, for being exposed to its results."

"I do not pity myself," replied Catherine, with an expression of countenance which the General and Lord Shirley knew not exactly how to define, but which those acquainted with the habits of her mind would have called devotional,—"I do not pity myself; because I believe all trials of temper to be salutary; and as this world is a state of probation, and the little daily trials of life are perhaps more difficult to be borne than great and unusual ones, I cannot allow myself to think that dispensation otherwise than a kind one, which must call into use those serviceable and Christian virtues, patience and forbearance."

There was a look almost amounting to a look of alarm which passed at this moment between the General and the peer; for, though respectable men and sincere believers, their religion was a thing which they were contented to know that they possessed, without bringing it into every-day use, like family jewels not fit for every-day wear; its efficacy as a daily guide, as the impeller to good feelings and the restrainer of unkind ones, and as a purifier and regulator of the thoughts as well as actions, was never present to their minds; and any persons who should venture to make it evident that with them such an influence was perpetually present, they were consequently in the habit of styling methodists and fanatics. And here was a beautiful girl talking of this world as being a state of probation, and of courting trials in order to call forth christian virtues! Yet they both thought Catherine spoke with great simplicity; there was no af-

fectation of superabundant righteousness, and when Mrs. Baynton entered the room, the smile with which she regarded her was evidently sincere, and bore strong marks of an unaffectedly kind and christian spirit.

"You look cold," said Catherine, setting a chair for her aunt very near the fire; "pray take this seat."

"And cross too!" muttered the General.

"I thank you," coldly replied Mrs. Baynton; then with a forced and bitter smile, she added, "I thank you, madam, for doing the honours of this fireside to me!"

"Whew!" whistled the General; while Catherine by a look besought his forbearance, and proved her own by taking no notice of this ungracious speech, but seating herself by Mrs. Baynton's side, she fell into a mournful though not sullen silence; a silence which no one, from different causes, was disposed to break. Lord Shirley was contemplating the fine profile of Catherine, which acquired new beauty from the declining attitude of the head, while the direction of her eyes to the fire, displayed the beauty of her long dark eye-lashes. Mrs. Baynton's inclination to talk was checked by every species of ill-humour. And sad, tender, remorseful recollections kept the General silent, till at last, with a look and a sigh of agony he suddenly rose and left the room. Catherine's eyes followed him, filling with tears as they did so; and when he closed the door, she laid her hands on the table near her, and leaned her head on them.

She had thus for a few minutes indulged her sympathy with the General, when Mrs. Baynton exclaimed, "Upon my word, Miss Shirley, you have an excellent idea indeed of entertaining your guests! Lord Shirley will not find his visit very amusing."

"Could Lord Shirley come to the house of mourning expecting to be entertained, madam?" replied Catherine, meekly.

"At least he did not expect such unnecessary mopishness! I dare say you would have talked fast enough to Mrs. Norris and your other old associates."

An indignant blush overspread the cheek of Catherine; but with a sudden effort she resumed her composure, turning her eyes now evidently full of tears on the ground; then rising, she made a graceful bend of the head to Mrs. Baynton and the earl, and walked to the door.

"Pray, madam, are you going after my brother?" asked Mrs. Baynton.

"Yes, madam, it is my intention to follow him; I conclude he has gone to his study, and I do not think it is good for him to be alone."

"May be so," replied her aunt; "but though I am his sister, and have known him longer than you, I never dared to intrude into his retirement; no, nor even his poor dear last wife, whom he loved better than he ever did love or ever can love any one in the world."

"I conclude he did indeed love her," said Catherine with a deep sigh; for she recollected it was this poor dear wife's influence that had so long prevented him from forgiving her father. "But circumstances are changed since—the General has lost his only child, and I am that child's daughter—surely then he will not deem my wish to soothe him by weeping with him an impertinent intrusion? At any rate it is my duty to offer him my sympathy and society, and if he dislikes to have them he will be candid enough to say so."

So saying, and without waiting for more objections from her provoking relative, she left the room, and hastened to the General's study; leaving Mrs. Baynton to vent her feelings to the sympathizing peer, as she flattered herself she should find him.

"There now," she began, "did you ever, my lord, see such a conceited, obstinate, independent miss?—No deference for the opinion of those, at least more *experienced* than herself. And what a want of manners, to go and intrude into a gentleman's study, who evidently retired in order to be alone!"

"But that gentleman is her grandfather," coolly replied Lord Shirley; "and it must be a consolation to both of them to weep together over their mutual loss."

"As to *her* loss, I do not believe she thinks much of it now she has gained so much, and caused herself to be acknowledged as General Shirley's heiress. Now, do you believe, my lord, that if she had really loved her father she could have cared if the General had fallen down and died, or been trodden to death in the street? And could she have forgiven him, and hung about him so soon, in that bold way?"

Lord Shirley had resolved to endeavour to soothe, and not irritate Mrs. Baynton, if possible, that her temper might not be rendered worse than usual, and Catherine thereby suffer more than she need suffer. But there is nothing that rouses the resentment of a generous heart more than unjust accusations of the amiable and innocent; and Lord Shirley could not hear with patience this misconstruction of actions which were evidently proofs of real tenderness and true nobleness of nature; and with an expression of countenance which had nothing conciliating in it, he answered—

"Your niece, madam, accounted for her feelings towards the General the other night in a very satisfactory manner; and in a way that did not, in my opinion, call in question her love of her father; and her forgiveness of the General so soon, was only a proof of the religious education which it is evident she has received."

"All methodistical cant, Lord Shirley, which she learnt among the vulgar people she has been brought up with. Yes—I hear she is mighty religious."

Lord Shirley, though his fears respecting

Catherine's being "righteous overmuch" were not a little excited by this information, was too indignant at the petty malice of his angry companion to express what he felt; he therefore only observed, that in moments of affliction, a display of piety, however marked, could not warrant the accusation against any one of being guilty of methodistical cant; and more especially not, against an artless, quick-feeling girl under Miss Shirley's affecting circumstances.

"Men and women may be pious and devotional in prosperity," added Lord Shirley, "but, generally speaking, they *must* be so in adversity; and where should a bereaved orphan like our new-found relative look for comfort and support, but to her Father who is in heaven?"

"Grant me patience!" cried Mrs. Baynton, "if this girl's methodism has not affected even you, my lord! — and I see, — yes, I see very clearly that she will alienate all hearts from me. Yes — I see, I am sure nobody loves me—I am the most miserable woman that exists;—I dare say this viper will soon get me turned out of my brother's house."

Here sobs of anger choked her utterance, and saved the vexed but disgusted Lionel from more vituperative agony. Still he could not help considering her with excessive pity; —for what consciousness can be so painful, and so difficult to endure, as that expressed by Macbeth,—"And no one loves me!" And Lord Shirley knew that the unhappy Mrs. Baynton had only, while echoing the words of Macbeth, expressed a bitter and melancholy truth. But luckily for him her loud expressions of grief, which as he could not soothe, Lord Shirley dared not notice, were interrupted by the re-entrance of the General leaning on the arm of Catherine.

On seeing them, Mrs. Baynton rose and retired, throwing the door after her with considerable force.

"We heard the sound of crying and wailing," said the General, "as we opened the door; I hope, Lionel, you have not been beating Mrs. Baynton?"

"I have been wounding her a little with my tongue, I believe," replied the earl; "a weapon which I thought proper to use in defence of injured merit."

"I am sorry you wounded her," said Catherine kindly, "however justifiable your motives were."

"I suspect, Lionel," observed the General with a languid smile, "Catherine takes the 'injured merit' to herself, and concludes she was the person you defended."

"Me! was it indeed me whom Lord Shirley defended!" said Catherine deeply blushing; "O! then I am more sorry than I was before;—and I again conjure you, my kind cousin, and you, my dear grandfather, for my sake, as well as my aunt's, not to keep up this very natural dislike of me at *present*, by defending me when she attacks me, or praising me as if in opposition to her. It is my wish to gain her affection if possible. I know my progress will be slow; but it will also be sure, if I am allowed to work my way quietly and peaceably; and in the meantime I shall, I trust, be improving myself in very necessary virtues."

To the good sense as well as the kindness of this request her hearers could not be deaf; and Lord Shirley promised to be more civil to Mrs. Baynton than ever, provided she did not speak very ill of her great-niece; and the General promised to behave as well as he could.

Mrs. Baynton did not appear again that night; and the evening, which ended early, served to exhibit Catherine as a soother of her afflicted grandfather in so amiable a light,—since she evidently overcame her own grief in order to endeavour to cheer his,—that Lord Shirley, as he went home, convinced himself it was his duty to visit the General every day, and that, come what would, he would dine there again on the morrow.

CHAPTER VII.

When Catherine and the General entered the room that evening, Lord Shirley thought he perceived a look of satisfaction on Catherine's countenance, through the traces of tears which evidently obscured the brilliancy of her eyes; and he found the truth of his observation confirmed when the General called him on one side before he took leave, and informed him that he had given Catherine permission to invite her friend Miss Merle to stay with her. But, that as he knew this family arrangement would excessively discompose the nerves of his sister, he wished Lord Shirley would come to breakfast the next morning, that he might be present when it was disclosed to her, and by his influence over her mind at once keep her anger in proper bounds, and reconcile her to a circumstance in his opinion as just as it was desirable to his granddaughter.

Lord Shirley promised compliance. But as he had something of Mrs. Baynton's pride, he was reconciled to the idea of this continuation of Catherine's intimacy with her inferiors, merely by his dislike that the aunt should be gratified in her inclinations, and the niece thwarted in hers. Lord Shirley was moreover surprised to see the General was so much afraid of the displeasure of his unamiable and also powerless sister, as to wish him to be present in order to stand between him

and her wrath. He must therefore, (though an accurate observer generally speaking) have failed to observe how much more frequent and sure is the operation of fear than that of love, in influencing the conduct of human beings towards each other; and that the power possessed by the meek, the tender, and the benevolent, in both sexes, is a non-entity compared to the dominion enjoyed by the violent, the selfish, and the overbearing.

The next morning Lord Shirley, even before the appointed hour, was seated at the General's breakfast-table.

"Well, my dear child," said the General, addressing himself very kindly to Catherine; "tell me at what hour you wish the carriage to be sent to bring your friend Miss Merle hither?"

"As soon as you please, sir," replied Catherine with subdued but evident pleasure.

"Miss Merle!" exclaimed Mrs. Baynton, "may I ask what she is coming hither for?"

"To stay with my granddaughter," coolly replied the General.

"Grant me patience!" vociferated his sister. "What! is that horrid Miss Merle coming hither? coming to stay at the house of General Shirley as a companion to his granddaughter and heiress?"

"Mrs. Baynton," cried the General, "*the* Miss Merle is coming hither, *that* Miss Merle, who loved, consoled, and *comforted* my granddaughter and heiress when her nearest of kin disowned, neglected, and *knew her not*.—*The* Miss Merle who deserved and gained her grateful affection, while her grandfather and her aunt *unnaturally* took no notice of her.—This is *the* Miss Merle who is coming to be my guest and her companion."

"Yes," returned Mrs. Baynton, "*one* Lucy Merle, the vulgar, democratic, conceited daughter of the vulgar, vixenish wife of a country linen-draper and a small-beer brewer."

"Vulgar! madam! vulgar!" exclaimed Catherine with a glow of indignation mantling on her cheek, which her own wrongs would never have gathered there; "Miss Merle vulgar! She is one of the loveliest and most accomplished girls I know."

"You know!" retorted Mrs. Baynton; "that *may be*, and *yet* Lucy Merle be a very ordinary sort of person."

"Then ask Lord Shirley, madam, if he did not think her a beautiful creature."

Lord Shirley, blushing as he did so, replied that he scarcely looked at her, but he believed she was a pretty genteel-looking girl.

"If so then," resumed Mrs. Baynton, "it is more particularly improper for this young person to be introduced into a line of life so much above her. She had much better remain in her present obscurity, lest she become an object of admiration to those whose designs, owing to the lowliness of her birth, cannot be honourable, especially as her father is in another country, and she has no protector."

More than the "hectic of a moment" passed across the cheek of Catherine at these words, while she rose in strong emotion and exclaimed, "No protector, madam! Lucy Merle no protector!" then pausing, and deeply sighing, she reseated herself and added, "poor thing! No—she has indeed no protector."

"Then," rejoined her aunt, "I conclude you feel the propriety of not exposing her to improper admiration and improper addresses. Here is our noble cousin here," added she, smiling, "the admiration of all female eyes, the desire of all female hearts: can you answer it to your conscience to expose your friend to the danger of admiring and being admired by *him* for instance?"

"Danger! madam!" cried Catherine, "would Lucy Merle have any danger to fear from Lord Shirley?" darting at him as she spoke a look of almost fierce inquiry.

"None—none in the world," replied Lord Shirley eagerly, "were she ever so charming."

"I thought so," returned Catherine with quickness.

"That remark is not flattering to Lord Shirley's power of pleasing; for, if her honour be in no danger, her heart might. But perhaps, Miss Catherine, you think the earl a good speculation for your friend, and you wish (as you are used to contemplate unequal marriages with complacency) to see this young person the wife of your noble cousin, Lord Shirley?"

"Impossible that I should wish such a thing!" replied Catherine with a degree of eagerness which flattered the earl's self-love—and he gazed on her with grateful pleasure till she went on to say,—"Impossible, madam! not only because I have been brought up to reprobate unequal marriages, but also because, though I well know and approve the character of Lucy Merle, that of Lord Shirley is entirely unknown to me—and how do I know that he would make her happy?"

At this frank avowal, it is not in the power of words to describe the astonishment, the indignant astonishment that shot in angry glances from the eyes of Mrs. Baynton; the surprise not unmixed with archness that appeared on the countenance of the General; and the confusion and mortification that showed themselves in a succession of deep blushes on the face of the handsome earl, he who knew himself to be the most admired man at that moment in high life.

"Lionel!" said the General laughing, "I told you this girl was no flatterer!"

"Flatterer!" exclaimed her aunt, "she is absolutely rude and affronting, as well as absurd.—What! to suppose that one Lucy Merle would not be too happy to marry a nobleman, and a Shirley!"

"My mother married a Shirley, and her su-

perior in rank; and she was not too happy!" said Catherine deeply sighing; "yet she knew, loved, and idolized the character of the man she married. But surely what I said was not rude; if it was so, I request your pardon, my lord. I doubt not, when I have known you longer, I shall esteem you as you deserve; but till then, surely it could be no affront to say that I should be unwilling to trust you with the happiness of my dearest friend."

"Certainly, certainly not," answered Lord Shirley in a hurried uncomfortable manner; for he had been so used to command sudden as well as unqualified admiration, that the sensible caution evinced by Catherine's ingenuous declaration had given him a feeling of mortification unusual, and therefore hard to be borne; especially as in the recesses of his heart he had thought that Catherine herself might not perhaps be reluctant to receive his addresses;—yet he was now honestly informed by Catherine, she was not at all sure he would be a good match even for her humble friend!

"It is impossible," said Mrs. Baynton with great acrimony, "to hold any satisfactory conversation with persons with whom, from the company they have kept and the sort of education they have received, one can have no community of thought or feeling; and I foresee that you, my deluded brother, by allowing your granddaughter to continue her acquaintance with those low persons, will only perpetuate those notions it were better for her to get rid of as soon as possible.—Let me tell you, Miss Catherine Shirley, that any notice *whatever* from Lord Shirley would be an honour to a Lucy Merle."

"Any notice *whatever*, madam!" echoed Catherine, regarding her with surprise mingled with suspicion and alarm.

"It is vulgar to repeat a person's words, child!" said Mrs. Baynton; "but I did say so."

"Then you said wrong, madam," exclaimed Lord Shirley, his fine face suffused with a more worthy glow than what had so lately crimsoned it; for it sprung from a more worthy cause, and one becoming the real nobleness of his nature and the correctness of his principles: "The notice even of a *prince* would be no *honour*, but a decided *dishonour*, to any woman, however low her situation in life, if it implied dishonourable wishes and dishonourable intentions; and, so far from your friend's being in any danger from my assiduities,—for who ever dared, even by implication, to brand me with the name of seducer? that, were she in danger from any one else, I myself would be to her the protector which Providence has denied her!"

"I believe you, I believe you!" cried Catherine with sparkling eyes, and eagerly giving him her hand, gazing earnestly, and almost unconsciously, as she did so, on the earl's deep blush and ingenuous expression of countenance, which carried home to her heart the conviction that he spoke nothing but the truth. "My dear lord," she added, "I am disposed to think very highly of you for two reasons; first, because you were my poor father's true and zealous friend; and, secondly, because you have such a habit of blushing; and it was a remark of my poor mother's—that being whom I regarded as a model of correct observation—'that women may blush from want of knowledge of the world, from weakness of nerves, and many inadequate and some improper feelings; but a man's blushes, especially those of a man of the world, are always,' said she, 'in my opinion, a proof, that an intercourse with that world has not rubbed off the gloss of his best feelings; but that, if he be not still entirely virtuous, he retains a love of virtue, and a degree of sensibility, which may ultimately make him a blessing to himself and others.'"

Lord Shirley did not blush the less for these commendations on his blushes, which Catherine delivered with cheeks glowing like his own. But though Lord Shirley blushed from pleasure, it was not unmixed pleasure; as the warmth and readiness of her praise was even a stronger proof of her indifference than her preceding frankness had been.

The General made no observation. But not so his sister. She drawing herself up, with a disdainful look declared, that "she never heard any thing so indecorous in her life, as a young lady's admiring so warmly and avowedly a gentleman's blushes! It was really fulsome flattery, though spoken in the words of a third person."

Consternation the most painful kept Catherine silent, and indignation Lord Shirley; but the General, with great vehemence declared, that there was no knowing how to please a crabbed old woman like her. "One moment," cried he, "you scold the poor child because she does not say civil things to a man, and the next you abuse her because she says too many!"

To this speech his sister made an angry retort, which he as angrily answered; till harsh words succeeded so rapidly to each other, that Lord Shirley made a hasty bow, and was withdrawing from so unpleasant a scene, but was requested to stay by the General, who, ringing the bell, desired the carriage might go instantly for Miss Merle.

This order led Mrs. Baynton back to the original cause of their dispute; and she desired to know whether the General really meant that this nobody should sit at table with them.

"To be sure, I do."

"What! when there is company?"

"Undoubtedly."

"What a want of proper pride!"

"No—what a proof of true pride! Mrs. Baynton, I am too proud to suppose the man

or woman whom *I* think good enough to *associate* with *me* is not fit company for any guest of mine."

"But how do you know, brother, that she will not help herself with her own knife and fork, and feed herself with her knife?"

"And suppose she should?" replied the General. "Lord Shirley, don't you think you could survive the shock?"

"Yes, General," he replied; "as I have not the same exquisite susceptibility which distinguishes, I see, another of the family."

"I must be allowed," said Catherine blushing, "to say, that you seem, madam, to have very erroneous notions of what the family of a respectable tradesman is. My friend Lucy has never associated with the very vulgar, though not, probably, with the very high; and I am sure she has too strong a sense of nicety, as well as decorum, to offend against the decencies of life at *any* table."

"I do not doubt it—I do not doubt it at all, my dear," replied the General, "spite of what that fantastical old lady thinks or says."

"Brother! General Shirley! *I*—I—despise you!" said his sister, nearly choked with passion, and leaving the room with precipitation; while Catherine, only too conscious that she was already, and must become still more, a constant source of contention between her aunt and her grandfather, could not regain her tranquillity, though kindly soothed by the General and the earl.

"Do not grieve, my sweet child," said the General; "if she had not this and *you* to complain of, she would have something else. Complaining is to her like a prepared atmosphere to the consumptive patient; she could not live without it. She led my first wife a wearisome existence, who was a sweet gentle being, and had not spirit enough to resist her; and nevertheless my sister always declared that Mrs. Shirley was the worst of tempers. My second wife kept her in order, and she hated her during her life; but when she died, she declared she was the most angelic creature breathing! In short, there is no accounting for the obliquities of temper; all one can do is to curb one's own temper, and to bear with that of others."

"But one cannot do that with certainty without the aid of *religion*," cried Catherine. "And tried as I am likely to be, what do I not owe to that excellent mother who taught me to endeavour to be a practical Christian, and that excellent father, who added his instructions to hers!" A mournful silence ensued, which was broken by the arrival of Lucy Merle.

Catherine immediately left the room to receive her friend and conduct her to her own apartment; while Lord Shirley, declaring his intention of returning to dinner, left the General to himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

Before the dinner-hour drew nigh, the General received a note from the earl, informing him that a letter had just reached him from his younger sister, Lady Frances, telling him that she expected to be in London and at his house in a few hours, and in that case he hoped he might be allowed to bring her with him. This note the General sent to Mrs. Baynton for her perusal, desiring her at the same time to write to Lord Shirley, that he should be happy to see Lady Frances. Mrs. Baynton complied with his desire; but she could scarcely forbear inserting in the note how shocked she was that her fair and noble relative would be forced to meet at the General's table company so unworthy of her.

Neither the General nor Mrs. Baynton had seen Lady Frances since she was quite a child, as she had for many years resided with an aunt of her mother's in Scotland; but they knew her to be a distinguished belle even amongst the lovely daughters of Caledonia, and she was on the point of marriage with a Scotch nobleman.

Mrs. Baynton, who piqued herself on the Shirley beauty, was extremely anxious to see this young lady, who still upheld that distinction so flattering to her family vanity, and without calling forth that personal jealousy which similar advantage in a near relation like Catherine,—one, too, who moved in the same circle as herself,—could not fail to excite in her envious mind. Eagerly, therefore, did she look forward to the arrival of Lady Frances; and calling up the most gracious expression to her countenance, she resolved, in order to do honour to her noble relations, to forget the provoking dispute that had driven her from the presence of the General, and even overlook the misery of being obliged to sit at table with nobody knew who.

Catherine, meanwhile, was disclosing to Lucy Merle the irritated state of her aunt's mind, and earnestly begging her to be on her guard, and not irritate her still more by severe replies, however provoked; while Lucy, knowing herself, begged to be allowed to dine in Catherine's apartment, lest she should be tempted to affront her aunt.

"You do yourself injustice," replied Catherine; "for I know you will not only behave with firmness and dignity becoming your own worth and my regard, but also with that forbearance becoming your sex and age, and due to Mrs. Baynton's rank and situation."

"Due to her rank, perhaps, as society now is; but not becoming my principles."

"Not your *political* ones; but remember, you are a Christian, and forbearance is a Christian's duty."

"Ay, my dear friend," replied Lucy; "I

can bear to hear *you* talk of Christian duty, for *you*, I know, practise all you preach."

There was no one in the drawing-room but the General and Lord Shirley when Lucy entered leaning on Catherine. She had been already presented to the earl, and the former did not receive her as a stranger, for he took her hand and welcomed her in the kindest manner.

"I have experienced a disappointment today, my dear child," said the General to Catherine; "I expected Lord Shirley would have brought with him his sister Lady Frances, but she is detained a week longer in Scotland."

Lord Shirley, meanwhile,—though not at all conscious that he did so,—was distressing Lucy Merle by the earnestness with which he looked at her; nay, he did not only look at, he absolutely examined her face with fixed attention, for he thought he had somewhere seen features resembling hers, and those features were remarkable. Her beauty,—and she was very handsome,—was of that cast of features and of that peculiar look which is usually called Jewish. Her outline was bold, for her nose approached the aquiline, and her mouth was rather wide; but this defect was made amends for by the excessive beauty of her full red lips, which, whenever they opened, disclosed the finest teeth possible. Her forehead was high and open, her hair glossy and of a jet black. Her eye-brows were thick, and rather too near each other; her eyes were of a light and sparkling grey; but so long and black were the eye-lashes that veiled them, that in some views they had all the effect of dark ones. Her complexion was a decided brown, or olive colour; but so clear that at every moment "her pure and eloquent blood spoke in her cheeks," and made it impossible for her to conceal the incessant emotion to which her quick feelings exposed her. Her person was tall and even commanding, but it was rather too thin for beauty; still, when dressed to advantage, as she now was, she had altogether a most striking and commanding appearance.

Catherine and the General both observed the earnest manner in which the earl had examined Lucy's features, though neither of them wondered that he should take pleasure in looking at a very lovely girl; but they also observed that his earnest gaze distressed her; and the General, to divert the attention which was evidently become painful, desired Lord Shirley to take down a new book of prints which he had lately purchased, and show it to the ladies. He did so; and as they were viewing it, the General, observing that Lucy looked at the prints so closely as to discover that she was short-sighted, and consequently, that it would be more agreeable to her to look at them sitting, brought her a chair with well-bred alacrity, and was in the act of presenting it to her with a bow of *the old school*, a bow at once graceful and respectful, while Lord Shirley was smiling his approbation of the General's gallantry when Mrs. Baynton entered the room.

The General's respectful obeisance, and Lord Shirley's look of pleasure, at once appeared to her sufficient proofs that this fine young creature was the admired inheritor of the Shirley beauty, especially as she was in cousin's mourning, as it is called; and she could not for a moment imagine that *a Lucy Merle* would be in mourning for a *Shirley*. Accordingly she eagerly advanced towards Lucy, whom though she had heard, she had never seen; and while Lucy awaited her approach with all the dignity of a proud republican conscious of injury, she put on one of her sweetest smiles, and saluting her cheek, exclaimed "I am so glad! so delighted to see you, my sweet girl! This is a pleasure I have long been ambitious of!"

Nothing could exceed the silent astonishment of the General and Lord Shirley, except the almost remorseful confusion and surprise of Lucy, and the grateful pleasure of Catherine, who now advancing from another part of the room, was on the point of saying—"My dear aunt, how truly kind is this!" when the servant announced dinner, just as Mrs. Baynton had heard the agitated Lucy reply in a low voice, "You are very kind, I am sure, madam."

The General, who soon began to suspect the truth, again bowing respectfully, drew the arm of Lucy under his, and led her into the dining-room, while the earl gave his to the aunt and niece. The former then said in an audible whisper, which was overheard by the General, "I congratulate you, my lord! She is a sweet beautiful creature! quite the Shirley style of feature—quite the Shirley profile; don't you think so? far more like our family than Miss Shirley is."

Lord Shirley now discovered the mistake, and was too mischievous to undeceive her, as the longer it was continued the more likely it was to end in her mortification, which he was the more inclined to enjoy, because she never asked where Lucy Merle was, and why they went to dinner without her; concluding, he supposed, that her representations had been attended to.

When they were seated at table, Mrs. Baynton hoped her ladyship had had a pleasant journey; and before Catherine, who now understood the whole truth, could reply and rectify the mistake, the General said "Does your ladyship take soup?" Then turning to Lord Shirley, he said, "Yes—the true Shirley style and profile, eh! Lionel!" While Mrs. Baynton, gazing on her blushing vis-à-vis, with a mouth distended, with a smile of ineffable conceit declared "she blushed as becomingly as her brother."

The gentlemen could now no longer restrain

their laughter; nor even Lucy herself, who now understood that she was taken for the Lady Frances Shirley whom she had expected to meet; but Catherine regarding them with a look of reproach, and leaning forward to speak to her aunt in a low voice, lest the servants should overhear her, said, "Dear madam, this is not Lady Frances Shirley, but my friend Lucy Merle!"

Rage too mighty for utterance now lightened from the dark eye of Mrs. Baynton, while the General said, "Fy, Catherine, fy! why did you so soon put a stop to a little harmless pleasantry?"

"Excuse me, sir; but I cannot think any pleasantry harmless that must end in pain to another."

"Pshaw! what a little Puritan it is!" added the General; and was going on, but stopped in compliance with the beseeching looks of Catherine, and also in alarm at the frightful looks of his sister, whom rage too mighty for words rendered entirely silent, though her heaving bosom sufficiently proved the passion that was struggling within it. Lord Shirley, the General, and Lucy, meanwhile went on with their dinner, not appearing to notice her emotion; but Catherine was wholly unable to take her attention off her aunt, whom she expected to see every moment seized with indisposition; expecially as the General could not help complimenting Miss Merle on her quality look, which had even deceived a lady of his sister's experience in such advantages. To which Lucy could not restrain herself from replying,—

"You would indeed congratulate me, sir, if you knew how much this little mistake confirms me in my own peculiar way of thinking, and in my conviction of the emptiness of the distinctions of birth; for, if they really conferred that superiority which is attributed to them, could I, the low-born Lucy Merle, have been mistaken by that honourable lady for the noble Lady Frances Shirley?"

Though Lucy said this with becoming blushes and feminine gentleness, the earl and the General were not pleased with the observation, and Catherine, on every account, wished it unsaid at this moment; and the more so, as it restored Mrs. Baynton to her speech by the additional indignation which it excited; while Catherine, afraid of what she might utter, dismissed the servants, who had just set the second course on the table. "Am I then made a laughing-stock to girls?" screamed out Mrs. Baynton. "But I will not forgive it while I live." And springing from her seat, she was running out of the room; but Catherine hung on her gown, and following her, conjured her to forgive what had passed, blaming herself for not having presented her friend, and owning she had not in her opinion been quite well used.

The candour and generosity of Catherine—qualities which Mrs. Baynton admired and envied, but could not imitate—made her at this season of irritation more odious to her than ever; and alive only to the feelings of the moment, she hastily disengaged her gown from Catherine's grasp; and giving her a violent push, which drove her against the corner of the side-board, she ran out of the room.

The sight of Catherine, evidently in pain, called forth all the violence of her young friend, and her eyes beamed with indignation. "Has she hurt you? Are you much hurt?" screamed out the affectionate girl, running to her; while Lord Shirley faltered out the same question; and the General sat in speechless, motionless consternation.

"I am not much hurt, and the pain is almost gone," said Catherine. "Oh! it was nothing!—nothing at all!"

"But it may be something, next time," muttered the General; "and she shall not stay under this roof to do you mischief."

As he said these words, he had drawn Catherine fondly on his knee; but on hearing them she sprung up, regardless of the pain she felt, and in the most earnest terms conjured the General to be not *just*, but *merciful*.

"I *mean* to be just, and therefore cannot be *merciful*, my dear," he replied. Then, with a look and manner which forbade further reply, he opened the door of his library, and locked himself in there.

"Oh, Lord Shirley!" exclaimed Catherine, "for pity's sake, nay, for the sake of justice, let me beg of you to intercede for my poor aunt! *Indeed*, indeed, in this instance, she was more sinned against than sinning!"

"What! when she was the means of hurting you at the very moment when you were blaming yourself, and resenting her wrongs!"

"Yes; for what I said was officious and ill-timed. It was provoking, indeed it was, coming as it did from one who was the cause of all that disturbed her."

"How so?—You the cause!"

"Yes—my introduction into the family, and my bringing my friend Lucy here, were certainly the cause; and she must hate me, I know she must."

"And is hatred, especially that of an aunt to a niece, so amiable a feeling, that, instead of being punished, you think Mrs. Baynton ought to be rewarded for it?—Suppose she had pushed you so violently against the corner of the side-board, as to cause a serious injury of which you had died, would the jury have been influenced by your reasoning to acquit her of murder? If they did, they must have been a jury composed of elderly aunts who had young and handsome nieces."

"My lord," cried Lucy, her eyes sparkling with fierce indignation, and her brow contracted into an almost awful frown, "let me entreat you not to say a word for this horrid woman. Who knows, as the General says,

but the *next time* she may indeed injure her!" Then, before Lord Shirley could recollect where he had seen that eye and that brow, even more peculiar in anger than they were in mildness, her features relaxed into tender sorrow, and clasping Catherine to her bosom, she wept over her in silence.

"I am silenced, but not convinced," said Catherine; "for I enter into my aunt's feelings, and can make allowances for them."

"Yes; you have done nothing else but consider her feelings ever since you came; but when has she ever considered yours?"

"No matter; what glory is it, if when ye are buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently? But if, when you do well and suffer for it ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

"Sweet enthusiast!" almost escaped the lips of Lord Shirley; for, like most men and women of the world, he had such a dread of any thing which approached fanaticism and enthusiasm, that he fancied the simple language of a sincere Christian, such as Catherine had just spoken, resembled them too nearly. But before he could reply, the General entered the room, and, in a low but firm voice, said he had written to his sister to desire she would seek another abode to-morrow.

"And I—I am the cause!" cried Catherine with great feeling. "It is I who drive her forth from that home which she would else have enjoyed for years!"

"Miss Shirley, give me leave to tell you it is my sister's own vile temper, and not you, which is the cause of this exile. And as to calling this the home she would have enjoyed for years, can you in your conscience believe, my dear, that a woman with such a disposition can ever long *enjoy* any place? Besides, you seem to forget that the woman for whom you plead was one of those who strove the most to keep your beloved father from *his* home." (Here the General's voice was stopped by strong emotion; and Catherine raised her tearful eyes to Heaven.) "Does not his child," he continued, "owe some retributive justice to his memory?"

"Yes—yes," cried Catherine;—"she does, the only justice worthy of it!"

"And do you forget that your lamented mother had not a foe so inveterate against her, and the success of my son's appeals to have her received by me, as this cruel aunt whose cause you are thus advocating?"

"Oh, no;—I remember it all. I remember my father's woes, and my mother's wrongs. But that mother taught her child to forgive injuries; to return good for evil; and to endeavour to fashion her life according to that holy rule which teaches to love our enemies; to do good to those that hate us; and pray for those who despitefully use and persecute us!—Sir, the justice, the only justice I owe the memory of my lost parents, is to act up to their precepts, and prove that their child is neither unworthy of nor ungrateful for the pains they bestowed upon her mind and heart!"

"You are a noble creature," said the General, sobbing as he spoke. "This is magnanimity—is it not, Lionel?"

Lord Shirley, affected himself, could only echo the word "noble."

But these praises, or rather the wording of them, displeased Catherine; for she felt that what she had said was spoken neither in a magnanimous nor noble spirit, but simply in a Christian one, and as a fulfilment of her Christian duty.—At this moment a servant came in to say that Mrs. Baynton wished to see the earl—and he instantly obeyed the summons.

While he was gone, a sort of perturbed silence took place; and Catherine thought she observed on the General's countenance a degree of anxious emotion which portended well for the interest of her aunt.

It was not long before Lord Shirley returned; but evidently not very kindly impressed in favour of the power from whom he came as ambassador. The truth was, that when Mrs. Baynton's frantic rage had a little subsided, her pride became alarmed at the consciousness of the vulgar, unbecoming, and unfeminine manner in which she had displayed her feelings; and felt the more shame, because she had so behaved in the presence of her noble cousin; to what such a nobody as Lucy Merle thought of her conduct she was perfectly indifferent. Her anger she thought, and with some truth, was justifiable, but the mode of expressing it the contrary; and she felt that an apology for it was due to the person whom she had thus offended. She also felt, that without such an apology, she had no chance of appeasing her brother, whom, when once resolved, she knew to be unbending; and that, with it, she might possibly be restored to favour, and allowed to remain where she was. Accordingly she wished to see Lord Shirley, in order to make him her agent on the occasion; and as soon as he obeyed her summons, she began, with many regrets for the quickness of her *sensibilities*, to express her sorrow and shame that her just resentment of injuries should have led her into so improper a way of displaying her sense of them.

"Improper! madam! Not only improper, but unjust," cried Lord Shirley, fired with indignation, while he contrasted, in idea, the dispositions of the aunt and the niece. "You vented your anger on the innocent, not the offending. Your arm should have been lifted against the General or me, not your amiable, unoffending, and, I must say, *angelic* niece."

If Lord Shirley had wished to revenge Catherine's wrongs to the utmost, he could not have succeeded better than by giving such praises to the being towards whom she felt the strongest of all passions—jealousy.

"Well, this I was not prepared for," she at length faintly articulated. "I thought, at least, I had a friend in you, my lord."

"And so you have, madam," replied Lord Shirley, a little moved by her distress; "and so you shall find me, if you let me know how I can serve you. Else why did I instantly obey your summons?"

"True—very true," sighed Mrs. Baynton. "This, then, my lord, is my business with you. I feel that I have offended my own dignity, and my niece's, by giving her a violent push; and a true gentlewoman, my lord, is not ashamed to apologize for the fault she has committed against her rank as a gentlewoman. Of my just resentment towards Miss Shirley, the canting plausible cause of all my misery, I never can, never *will* repent."

Lord Shirley now exclaimed, with haughty displeasure on his countenance, "And was it only to hear your abuse of your niece, madam, that you sent for me?"

"No, my lord; it was to request you to be the bearer of my apologies to Miss Shirley—apologies for my personal violence I mean, and that ONLY."

"Am I to add those *emphasized* words, madam, when I deliver your message?"

"Ye—es, my lord, if Miss Shirley be *alone*; but not if the *General* be present."

Lord Shirley, disgusted at her mean conduct as much as at her vindictive injustice, immediately bowed, and, without looking at her, withdrew.

"Well, my lord, have you seen my aunt?" said Catherine eagerly, who had been endeavouring during the earl's absence to melt the General's heart in favour of his offending sister.

"I have seen your aunt," he coolly replied, "and she has deputed me to make her apologies to you for having forgotten herself so far as to push you away from her in the manner she did."

"Indeed!—Well, that is more than I expected," muttered the General.

"And more than I required, I am sure," cried Catherine. "And I will go to her directly and beg her to forget, as I do, all that has passed of an unpleasant nature."

"You had better remain where you are, my dear Miss Shirley," said the earl smiling, "as the pacification is not so complete as your generous nature imagines it to be; and it is my opinion, that when I shall have certified to Mrs. Baynton that Miss Shirley accepts her apologies, it will be better to leave that lady to her own meditations, at least till tomorrow."

"My poor aunt!" cried Catherine; "I see she has no friend, then, but myself."

"And your being her friend is not the means of making *me* so," replied the earl; "because your generosity only makes me more conscious of the contrary quality in *her*. Therefore, for *her* sake you must try to be less *amiable*."

Catherine was going to reply, when Lucy Merle, pulling her by the arm, made her remark a great change in the General's countenance; and she had scarcely asked him if he was unwell, when he desired his physician to be sent for directly, as he felt the approach of his old enemy the gout, and was afraid it was going to attack his stomach. While Catherine, who had never witnessed this painful disorder, and who feared the agitation of which she had been the innocent cause had helped to bring it on, was hanging over the couch to which the General had been conveyed, and trying to make herself useful to him, Lord Shirley took an opportunity of whispering in her ear, that her benevolent wishes concerning her aunt would find the gout their most effectual assistant, as Mrs. Baynton, to do her justice, was the best of nurses; and the General, when ill with the gout, could never bear any one near him but her.

"I am *glad* to hear it," cried Catherine; "and awkward as I already am on this occasion, I hope I shall be more awkward still, that my aunt may be recalled to her office, and I dismissed, even though I am dismissed for incompetency. Well, little did I think that I should ever wish to delegate to another the office of nurse to my grandfather!"

When the physician came, he ordered the General to keep his room, and be as quiet as possible; adding, "With such a skilful and experienced nurse as your sister, General, you can't fail to do well; and she knows all that is necessary to be done, you know—but where is she?—why do I not see her at her post?"

"That young creature is my nurse *now*, Dr. ——," said the General, sighing. "Let me present to you my granddaughter, Catherine Shirley, my son William's only child."

This was the first time the General had had an opportunity of introducing Catherine, and doing so induced a degree of agitation not favourable to his complaint.

"Young lady, I rejoice to see you *here*," replied Dr. ——. "But you, my good friend, must not look back, but forward, now, if you mean to get well; and though I doubt not but the sight of this young nurse is very delightful to you, I suspect that of your old one would be more salutary;—therefore I advise you to call her to you as soon as possible."

"There, sir, did you hear that?" cried Catherine, as soon as Dr. —— was out of hearing; "you *must* forgive my poor aunt *now*."

"Pshaw!" muttered the General; "one would really think that you bribed the doctor to prescribe the nauseous dose to me."

"But if the nauseous dose be the only medicine that can do you good,—surely, dear sir, you are not such a baby as to object to it because it is *nauseous?*"

"Well, well—say no more at present; and

I suppose you will allow that it is only proper that she should offer her services?"

"I am not sure of that."

"Indeed," cried Lord Shirley, "you carry your indulgence too far; and the General is only just in his expectations. Nor will his sister, I am convinced, hesitate to ask permission to attend on him when I have seen her, and told her how ill he is." Then without waiting for a reply from the General, Lord Shirley repaired to Mrs. Baynton's apartment. He found her in tears — tears more of anger than of grief; as she had been informed of the General's attack, and concluded that Catherine would take advantage of his illness to ingratiate herself so completely into his favour, that her influence would be wholly undermined, her services treated as wholly unnecessary, and her chance of remaining in the house wholly annihilated. But her tears passed with the earl for tears of affectionate alarm; and after assuring her that Catherine received her apologies with eager pleasure, he advised her, if she wished to conciliate the General, to take advantage of the present circumstances, and offer her services as nurse; which, after Dr. ——'s eulogy on her nursing powers, would, he was convinced, be most kindly received.

"Yes—I may offer," replied Mrs. Baynton, "but I dare say the new nurse will take care my offer shall not be accepted."

"If by the new nurse, you mean your amiable *niece*, madam, I must tell you that she is your warmest advocate with your offended brother."

"Grant me patience!" exclaimed Mrs. Baynton. "Then you mean to say that if my brother forgives me, it will be at her intercession?"

"I do, madam."

"Then, my lord, I will not be forgiven; and I had rather leave the house this moment—and, mark me, however ill the General may be, he shall *request*, for I will not *offer* my assistance!"

Lord Shirley immediately rose, and in silence left this amiable woman to her own meditations.

"I am afraid I have made bad worse," said the earl in a whisper to Catherine, in reply to the questioning glance of her eyes.—The General did not speak, but he looked anxious and disappointed.

"There, take care, girl, how you pass me! —For pity's sake do," cried the General rather peevishly. "I see you have not been used to move near gouty persons."

"Indeed I have not," replied Catherine affectionately; "and earnestly for your sake, dear sir, do I now wish I had;—but that wish is weak, because a vain one. The wish that my aunt was at her post as your head nurse is a rational one, because it may be gratified."

"What! would you have me *sue* to the old virago?"

"I would have you forgive your sister, sir, though she had sinned against you ever so much and ever so often; and especially as it is an offence against me, not yourself, that you are resenting."

"I could easier have forgiven a fault against myself, you ungrateful girl!"

"But, dear sir, unforgiveness is unforgiveness, however amiable the motive."

But Catherine would have continued in vain to speak moral sentiments in aid of her wishes, had not her own awkwardness served her cause effectually; for now she not only seemed to be on the point of touching the inflamed toe, where at length the gout settled, but she let something fall out of her hand upon it; and the General uttered a cry of pain, accompanied by an oath. "I verily believe the girl did it on purpose to carry her point!" said the General, when the pain had subsided sufficiently to let him speak; and the distress visible in Catherine's expressive countenance inclined him to speak kindly. "The matter is decided now — Go, my dear, go and desire Norris to present my compliments to Mrs. Baynton, and tell her that her services are wanted in my apartment."

Lord Shirley tried to be glad, and to look so, because Catherine did; but he was provoked at concessions so ill-deserved by the object of them. "Shall we go away, sir, and leave you alone with my aunt?" said Catherine, too delicate to wish to witness what might, she thought, be a painful meeting between the brother and sister. But the General assuring her that he should take no notice of what had passed, she resolved to remain; and in about twenty minutes after she had been sent for, Mrs. Baynton, with great dignity, sailed into the room.

Catherine advanced towards her, half extending her hand; but her aunt would not even look at her, while she slowly approached the General, and said—"General Shirley, I am here according to your commands. What is your pleasure with me?"

"My business, madam, is pain, not pleasure, I assure you. I have gotten the gout, and I do not like to have any one come near me but yourself. Catherine is a kind-hearted, well-intentioned girl, but she does not understand waiting on gouty patients:—therefore I sent for you. So — is it peace or war between us?"

"Peace, if your infirmities make it necessary to you, brother. But I could not suppose I could be wanted where Miss Shirley was; I thought she was one of your great geniuses, who know every thing by intuition."

"Me!" cried the alarmed Catherine, "dear me, madam, do you take me for a genius? I am sure I hope not."

"I take you for a much better thing," replied the General, "a fine-tempered, forgiving, forbearing creature; but for all that I do

not like you very near me at present; therefore I recommend Lionel, your friend, and yourself, to go and eat the dessert." They immediately withdrew, and left the brother and sister together.

CHAPTER IX.

As Catherine was forbidden to enter the General's dressing-room because he was trying to rest, she and her companion, at Lord Shirley's particular desire, remained with him while he drank his wine; and when they adjourned to the drawing-room, the earl resumed the examination of the new prints which dinner had interrupted. From prints they got to books, of which the General had a choice collection in different languages; and it was soon evident to the earl, that, though they made no display of their knowledge, his young companions were perfectly well versed in every modern language. Their remarks on the prints had led him also to suspect they understood drawing; and the pleasure Catherine expressed at seeing a volume of Handel and Purcell bound up together, put by mistake in the drawer that held the prints, convinced him that music was one of her accomplishments.

"I do not expect," said the earl, smiling, "that you will either of you be guilty of the indecorum of owning you can draw like artists, and sing or play like professors; but I expect either of you will be very ready to say these fine things of the other. Therefore," affecting to whisper Lucy Merle, he said, "Does Miss Shirley draw?"

"Admirably."

"Does she play, and sing?"

"Delightfully."

"And now in your ear. Miss Shirley, does Miss Merle draw?"

"Very well."

"And play, and sing."

"Both—very pleasingly."

"All I know of languages, and all I know of music or drawing, I owe to the instructions of my friend, my lord," said Lucy Merle, blushing with grateful emotion while she spoke; "and when you have seen her drawings, and heard her sing and play, you will feel that I must have been stupid indeed, not to have profited in some measure by her instructions."

"I did not contradict your high-flown description of my performances," said Catherine, smiling, "because I knew Lord Shirley would naturally attribute my denial to modesty, or the affectation of it; and I well knew that those performances themselves would in time give him a juster idea of them."

"But when?" asked Lord Shirley.

"My drawings are locked up, and not easily gotten at at present; and in the present state of my spirits, as well as my grandfather's, you will feel, my lord," she added mournfully, "that I can neither play nor sing, even if propriety warranted it." And Lord Shirley, conscious that his wish had been prematurely expressed, asked her to excuse his want of thought, and led to other subjects.

It was late in the evening before Lord Shirley recollected that he had an engagement to sup at a fashionable coffee-house with a friend on the eve of leaving England; when he found it necessary to apologize to Catherine and Lucy for leaving them. That night the General's own man slept in the room with him, and Mrs. Baynton left him at midnight. The next morning, when she arose and heard the General was visible, she sent him a note, to know at what hour the carriage was to be ordered to conduct her to her future home, as the order for removal which she had received before, had never, that she knew of, been rescinded.

"Pshaw!" muttered the General to himself. "A vindictive! unforgiving—Well; e'en let her go—it will be a good riddance!" But a violent twinge in his great toe made him recollect how necessary she was; and he desired the servant to tell his sister that he wished to see her directly.

She came. The General desired her to forget and forgive; she cried a little; and he hemmed away a little hoarseness in his throat, and Mrs. Baynton consented to remain.

The gout seemed to have come on purpose to effect this reconciliation, for it disappeared two days after; during which time, Catherine on *principle* went very rarely into the General's room, in order to make his sole dependence on her aunt as great as possible; and when he complained to Lord Shirley that he thought she rather neglected him, the earl, who so far had learnt to know her, pointed out to her grandfather what could alone be the motive of her seeming neglect; and the General owned that he believed he was right.

Before the end of the week the General was down stairs as usual; and as Captain Shirley's death had then been known at least three weeks, and his father was recovered, the earl began to feel that his friends and acquaintance might with propriety wonder at the frequency and length of his visits in New Street; and his female friends were very curious to know what sort of a woman the new Miss Shirley was.

The earl also began to look forward with pain to the fourth of June, when Catherine, now known to him alone, would appear at Court, and be admired, and probably wooed, by men of as high pretensions as himself. And why should that idea give him pain, if Catherine was not the chosen of his heart? That heart forcibly whispered that she *was*

so; but he also felt that his judgment had not as yet ratified the choice of his heart; for had she not lived during three years with her inferiors in birth, and persons professing principles hostile (he thought) to the well-being of society? might she not have formed intimacies with persons whom he could not associate with? had she not an independence of character and a steadiness of affection, he believed he ought to call it principle, which would make her resist being called upon to give up those intimacies? and would not her husband, if he required this sacrifice, be degraded in her estimation? Was she not also methodistically inclined? And above all, did she not regard him with most complete indifference? Such were the thoughts that now every day in rapid succession occurred to the perturbed mind of Lord Shirley; but still he every day called in New Street, if he did not dine there, to gaze on the unconscious subject of them; who, by the display of some new grace or some new virtue, riveted his chains still closer each time he beheld her.

I have stated before that the General's gout left him so suddenly as to enable him to come down stairs and live as usual. Before the end of the week, and on the third Sunday since the loss of his son was known to him, he was able to rise early and breakfast, as was his custom, at nine o'clock, ten having been the hour the preceding morning. Accordingly, breakfast was brought in, and soon followed by Mrs. Baynton; who, seeing that the General did not seat himself, because he was waiting for Catherine to do the honours, observed with a malicious smile, "Nay, brother, you may as well sit down, and let me make the breakfast; for Miss Shirley and her friend are gone, nobody knows where, and there is no waiting for them; for who can tell when they may choose to return?"

"Catherine and her friend walked out at this time of day?"

"They went out long before eight o'clock."

"And pray, who went with them?"

"Nobody; Miss Shirley did not choose to take a servant."

"How very improper!"

"Yes; and not to be at home at breakfast is worse still. But Sunday is, you know, with a certain class, a *junketing* day; so, very likely they are gone to meet some of Lucy Merle's friend's at her mother's."

"Sunday a junketing day for Miss Shirley? No, Mrs. Baynton, I can't believe it."

"Or perhaps, brother, she has gone to some conventicle."

The General sighed, but spoke not; for he thought it possible; and that idea was the worst of the two.

"Well," said he, "I suppose when she comes she will condescend to explain where she has been, and in the meanwhile we will go to breakfast without her."

But the General had not his usual appetite, for Catherine had disappointed him. Punctuality was one of his virtues, and he required it consequently in others; nor had it been one of Catherine's least perfections in his eyes, that she was as punctual as he was. But now she was not home at the breakfast hour; and, disregarding the decorum necessary in a young lady of her rank in life, she had walked out no one knew whither, and without a servant! What a triumph, too, she was giving to her aunt! And the General was so conscious how much his sister enjoyed Catherine's delinquency, that he never once ventured to raise his eyes to her face. However, by half past nine, Catherine and Lucy returned; and blooming like the morning, from early rising and exercise, her hat in her hand, and her fine dark hair floating down her shoulders, Catherine ran into the room with eager and perturbed haste, in order to excuse her not being home to breakfast.

The first glance which the General caught of her brilliant bloom and ingenuous countenance tended so powerfully to disarm his anger, that he dared not trust himself with a second look; but turning away his head, he observed, "So — Miss Shirley — this is your boasted punctuality, is it?"

"My dear sir, ten has lately been the breakfast hour," replied Catherine, in a conciliating but firm tone; "therefore I had no idea you would breakfast at nine to-day."

"Very true," was rising to the General's lips, when he reflected that he must not forgive so soon, especially as Catherine's other fault was neither explained nor apologized for. "But why did you go out at all before breakfast, and without a servant? Such conduct is very improper in a young woman of your rank in life."

"Yes," cried Mrs. Baynton, "it is well, Miss Shirley, that you should remember who you are, and learn that dignity of conduct becoming General Shirley's heiress."

"But, madam, you must remember," replied Catherine, "how powerful habit is; and I was so long accustomed to live as if I was not the heiress of General Shirley, that it is very natural for me to forget what I now am, and act as I did when my situation in life was humbler."

Though Catherine did not mean to convey any thing like reproach to the General by these words, yet he felt them deeply; and as he raised his eyes to see by the countenance of the speaker with what spirit she uttered them, and saw her look was mild though earnest, her hair parting on her forehead and hanging adown her glowing cheeks increased her likeness to her father so much, and recalled him to his recollection so forcibly, at that time of his life when his hair was suffered to grow, and his open collar displayed his thick and fine-turned throat, that he could

scarcely endure the various feelings which assailed him; but starting from his seat he turned to the window and groaned aloud.

"There, madam!" cried Mrs. Baynton;—"you see what you have done—your poor grandfather felt the cruelty of your reproachful speech to the bottom of his heart. Though you make such a parade of your Christianity, it is plain that you do not forgive."

"What have I said that could be so unjustly interpreted?" exclaimed Catherine. And running up to the General, she added, "My dear sir, indeed whatever I said was without the slightest feeling of bitterness or intended reproach."

"I believe you, my child," cried the General.

"It is more than *I* do," replied his sister.

At this impeachment of her veracity, Catherine turned round with eyes sparkling with indignation, and had she worn Serena's girdle, its threads would certainly have given way; but recollecting that "charity suffereth long, and is kind, and is not easily provoked," she cast down her eyes again in recovered meekness, and only said, "I am sorry I ever gave you cause, madam, to doubt my veracity."

"You never did," cried the General, angrily.

"But all this time the young lady," observed Mrs. Baynton, "has never condescended to tell us where she has been."

"I have been to church, madam," replied Catherine.

"To church! What—to a methodist meeting, I suppose?"

"No, madam; I always go to church."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Quite sure." And the General almost uttered a "Thank Heaven!"

"But pray to what church? I suppose you went to hear some favourite fanatical preacher?"

"There is no sermon preached at such an hour; I only went to eight o'clock prayers at St. Margaret's Westminster."

"And why, pray, could you not have waited, and gone with us next Sunday at eleven, to hear our own excellent preacher at New-street chapel, instead of going out so *improperly* and *unfeelingly* soon after your father's death? Were you impatient to go and show yourself in your smart new mourning?"

"Go to church to show myself, madam!" exclaimed Catherine; "I trust few persons, if any, go to church from such motives. No—I have not been there yet since my affliction or my illness, and I could not be easy any longer without going to humble myself, in his own temple, before that Being who in his mercy has no doubt afflicted me. I knew that the rest of the family would not go any part of the day, and I thought by going at so early an hour I should avoid the appearance of being seen at church too soon after my loss, because so few persons would be out to see me."

"My dear child," cried the General, "you have acted and felt like yourself,—that is, piously and properly; but why did you not take a servant?"

"I forgot it," said Catherine, "as it is a sort of state I have not been accustomed to."

The General again groaned aloud. And Catherine, now aware how such allusions to her former situation must wound the General, seized his hand and pressed it affectionately, without daring to trust her voice to articulate an apology.

"Well, Miss Shirley, as you were guilty of such an outrage on propriety as to go to church at all before next Sunday, I am glad," said her aunt, "you went where you were not likely to be seen."

"I see no outrage of propriety at all in going to church so soon; going to worship the Deity is a very different thing from going to a ball; and I believe I also ought to go to church to-day, and no longer delay my duty to my Creator;—therefore ring the bell, Catherine, for I mean to go to church at eleven with all my family."

An angry reply was hovering on the lips of his sister, when her maid answered the bell, saying all the men were out. "Then tell them when they come in, that I desire they will get ready to go to church with us at eleven, and I shall want the carriage, though it is so short a distance."

"Dear me, madam!" cried the pert maid to her mistress, "why to be sure you are not going to church to-day?"

"Why not?" replied Mrs. Baynton.

"Why, madam, how can you go," she answered as she shut the door, "as your new pelisse is not come home from the altering?"

"There, my dear," observed the General, "you see there *are* persons who go to church to show themselves!"

Resentment choked for a time the words of Mrs. Baynton; but Catherine indignantly replied, she could not bear to hear her aunt so calumniated by her servant, and wondered at the patience with which Mrs. Baynton bore her impertinence—begging her to accompany them to church, in order to show the pert waiting-maid how unbecomingly she had misrepresented her motives; which, while misunderstood, might have a bad effect on the servant's own conduct.

The *bon-hommie* of Catherine, as the French call it, on this occasion overcame the General's gravity, and giving way to a hearty laugh, he exclaimed, "My dear simple child, do you then suppose that my sister's maid does not understand her mistress's usual motive of action better than you do?"

"General Shirley," replied his sister, with eyes on fire, "if you choose not to understand the sarcastic severity of your darling's speech,

I do; but I beg you and her to remember that I am my own mistress, and that I will go to church or stay away as I please; and that no one has any more business with my motives than my actions, and I will *not* go to the chapel to-day." So saying she left the room.

"But *I* will go to-day, if it be only to provoke her," muttered the General.

Catherine heard this speech, and heard it with consternation; for she felt that the General's motives for going were quite as reprehensible as his sister's might be for staying away. Yet how should she make him sensible of this? how could she venture, child as she was, to point out to the General an error of which he was wholly unconscious?

"Yes—yes," said he, as these thoughts were passing in her mind, "Yes—yes—that troublesome old woman shall not have her way; and though it is a cold day, go I will."

"No, no! pray do not!" eagerly exclaimed Catherine.

"Not go! when I hoped to please you and vex my sister at the same time? Not go!—And pray why not?"

"Because—because—" returned Catherine blushing and hesitating.

"Speak out, child! What are you afraid of?"

"Because it is surely wrong to go to a place of worship from any other motive than the wish of doing what is right and acceptable in the eyes of the Creator."

"So so!" said the General after a pause, during which he felt some degree of angry mortification; "then you think I am not *good* enough to go to church with you? Very well! very well! Really I believe my sister is right, and you have a turn for the sarcastic. Very well—then I will *not* go; for I do feel that my strongest motives for going were a wish, as I said before, to spite her and please you. There, child, here comes your friend, and the urn; therefore I shall leave you to get your breakfast and afterwards go to church together again if you like it." Then, with a motion of the hand which always forbade further debate, he retired into his own library, coldly asking Lucy Merle how she did as he passed her in the door-way.

"What is the matter with the General?" asked Lucy; "he looks hurt and displeased."

"No matter," replied Catherine, not thinking it right to disclose what she thought a fault in her grandfather. But she told enough of what passed, to make Lucy Merle join her in her wish that she had left word where she was going, and had also taken the servant with her. Still Catherine, spite of herself, fell into painful reverie. She felt that she had given the General pain, when he meant to give her pleasure;—but then she had only performed a duty which she thought she owed him; and if it was always easy and pleasant to perform duties, what merit was there in it! But the General would now not go to church—and what then? as it was not the mere performance of a public rite, but the spirit and feelings in which it was performed, that made it an acceptable offering or otherwise.

Lucy Merle was not an uninterested observer, meanwhile, of the various expressions that passed over her friend's expressive countenance; but her love for her was so chastised by respect, that she did not take the liberty of asking what so evidently disturbed her. Catherine, started, however, from her pensive silence, at the sound of the General's bell ringing violently; and soon after, a servant came to tell her he wished to see her in his library.

Fearfully Catherine obeyed the summons. But her dread vanished when the General, who had evidently been much agitated, opened his arms to her as soon as he saw her; and after giving her a cordial embrace, said, "I sent for you, my dear, to tell you I am going to church to-day, but not till the afternoon; because I know I shall feel a great deal of emotion, and I had rather therefore go when few who know me will be there to witness it; for fashionable people never go but in a morning, you know."

"Indeed I did not," replied Catherine.

"Oh! my dear, you have much to learn yet, and are come into quite a new world, believe me. But I must tell you, in order to brighten up that pensive face, rendered so, I suspect, by the thoughts of my anti-Christian feelings, that I am going to church now from motives which even *you* must approve;—namely, to humble myself before the Being who has chastised me, and to bless him for his great goodness in having given to me a child like you!—a creature at once my pride, my monitor, and my example. Nay, child, look up! for you have reason, and to look proudly too;—for I believe, my dear, you will be a blessing both to me and my family; I thank you. You taught me to look into my heart; and I *blushed* for the base motives which I saw there, impelling me to *profane* the temple of holiness by going thither from an unworthy impulse—pique towards one fellow-creature, and too earthly love of another. I own I was mortified at first, to be schooled by a child; but better feelings came at length, and I trust I shall be the better for your reproof as long as I live!"

Catherine, gratified but affected, wept upon his shoulder, saying within herself, "How could this feeling and generous-hearted man have remained so long obdurate to the prayers of such a son! How bad must those persons have been whose influence over him could thus choke up in his heart all the feelings of a father, and the sympathies of the man! If he loves me, how would he have loved my mother!"

"There, my dear, leave me now," said the

General; "for I wish to prepare an agreeable surprise for you against we return from church; —Be sure not to come into this room again till I give you leave."

Catherine obeyed; wondering what the General could mean. And Lucy Merle, as soon as she saw her, discovered that whatever it was that had oppressed her, the oppression was removed, and therefore probably the cause of it.

"You are happy again now, I see," said Lucy, smiling affectionately.

"Yes—though almost painfully overcome by my grandfather's goodness and kindness to me."

"It will be long before you are so overcome by your aunt's, I believe."

"Hush!" said Catherine; "it is better not to dwell on the faults of others; because, by so doing, we make it only more difficult to bear with them. But I assure you I do not despair of my aunt yet; for I mean to try to overcome evil by good, and, like the patriarch of old, wrestle with her till she blesses me."

"But he wrestled with an angel; and I see no likeness to an angel in your aunt. If she does bless you, I shall be more inclined to liken her to the wicked prophet of old, blessing where he was expected to curse."

"Forbear! I beseech you," replied Catherine; "nor, in imitation of wicked wits, make quotations from the Bible the means of severe reflections on a fellow-creature—that one, too, your friend's aunt.—As we are not going to the chapel yet, I shall impose on you, by way of necessary monition, Bishop Butler's sermon on 'The Government of the Tongue.'"

The friends then retired to their own apartment till the General summoned them to attend him to church.

CHAPTER X.

The General supported himself during divine service better than he expected he should do, and bore the salutations of those few persons of his acquaintance who were at church with great firmness; but he found it impossible to present his granddaughter to them, though he saw they expected it, and darted many scrutinizing glances at Catherine through her long crape veil; but as Lucy Merle was in mourning and wore a crape veil also, none knew with any certainty which was Miss Shirley; and it was soon reported that there were two Miss Shirleys, and both beauties. As soon as they returned home, Catherine asked when she was to be permitted to enter the library again; and the General led the way to it.

Catherine had sent to her new home two pictures of her father and mother, heads as big as life, painted by a first-rate artist, and reckoned surprising likenesses. But supposing that her grandfather would not like to see them as yet, if ever, she put them in a spare closet, where the General was not likely to come, of which Norris kept the key. Whether the General had ever heard that such pictures had been painted and seen in the gallery of the painter, or whether he only suspected it, it is unimportant; but he one day asked Norris if there were any pictures of his son and Mrs. Shirley, and being told that there were, and that they were then in his house, he desired to see them unknown to Catherine. After his first burst of grief at beholding them was over, he resolved to hang them up in his library, in token of his restored love to the son so long an exile from his sight, and of his entire forgiveness of, and bitter regret for that excellent but ill-treated woman, whom he had learnt too late to value and to wish for.

"You will find two old friends, my dear, in my library," said the General with a faltering voice; "and I hope you will be glad to see them; they ought to have been there long ago —but—." Here his voice absolutely failed him; and Catherine looking up, saw to what he alluded, and was for some time too much overcome to speak. To see her father's picture hanging in the apartment of his only surviving parent was pleasing and soothing to her;—yet it was naturally to be expected, that there it would in time be placed. But to behold that mother so long disowned, so long rejected as unworthy to mix her plebeian blood with that of a noble race,—though she was formed in person, mind, and heart, in all the highest aristocracy of nature;—to behold that mother now owned as a daughter of the family of Shirley, and displayed on speaking canvass in the favourite apartment of the very man whose rejection of her as his son's wife was supposed to have hastened her dissolution; to see this acknowledgment of her claims and her virtues, when the ear that would have hailed the sound of pardon with delight, was no longer able to hear, when the eyes that would have wept the tears of tender and grateful reconciliation were fixed in the motionless film of death,—was more than Catherine's filial and tender heart could endure without agony far surpassing every other feeling at the view; and clasping her hands together, she exclaimed, "Oh! my mother; my dear, *dear* mother! It is too late! It is indeed too late!" Then sinking on her knees, she hid her face with her hands.

There are some wounds which cannot be healed, some injuries that can never be repaired; and such wounds and such injuries were those which Catherine had received through the bosoms of her parents. The tardy forgiveness of the General, and the late honour which he was doing the memory of her pa-

rents, could not make her amends for the misery of seeing the death of one and the frantic anguish of the other occasioned by the General's long inflexibility; nor could hanging up the picture of that son's wife when dead, whom he scorned while living, immediately soothe the bleeding spirit of the affectionate child, who still sorrowed over the remembrance of her distant and her recent loss.

The General was now sensible how different her feelings were, and must be, from what he had pictured them to his expectation; and full of remorse, anguish, and disappointment, he sunk on his knees beside the weeping Catherine, and earnestly conjured her to pray to the spirit of her injured mother to forgive his cruelty, so bitterly, but properly punished.—"She looks forgiving!" added he.

"She was forgiving! She was an angel!" cried Catherine, rising.

"She is an angel, I trust," said the General with great emotion; "and I will pray to her as such for pardon."

"She always taught me to pray for you," replied Catherine; "therefore I *know* she never indulged resentment against you. How should she, sir? have I not told you my mother was a Christian?"

"But I call myself a Christian, yet I indulged resentment.—But did she really teach you to pray for me, sweet creature?" said he bursting into tears. "And I dare say she prayed for me herself."

"I am sure she did."

Catherine, while awaiting in silence till the General's self-upbraiding agony had subsided, cast her eyes again on the pictures of her parents, and beheld with something of pleasurable emotion the frames, the appropriate frames, which the General had soothed his feelings by bestowing on them. On his son's frame was a crown of laurel, and underneath, the words, "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*" On that of her mother were blended the symbols of housewifery, and the arts, geography and astronomy; for in all these the General heard from Catherine that her mother was eminently skilled, and had instructed her; underneath were these words, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband." When Catherine read these words, she could not help feeling a sensation of gratitude towards the General, for having at least done all he could now do to show his respect to her mother's memory, and his deep though late remorse; for Catherine knew that the picture so framed would lead to questions that must display her mother's merits, and the General's sense of them, in the most public and strongest point of view.

"My *dear* grandfather," said Catherine at length, "I thank and bless you for this tribute to my mother's virtues; and if departed spirits are ever allowed to witness what passes here, I doubt not but that both my parents are delighted spectators of this late but soothing atonement for all that you now deplore!"

The General could not yet recover himself sufficiently to speak; but motioning her to the door with his hand, she slowly and tearfully withdrew.

Perhaps there is not a better temporary cure for sorrow than indignation; and the General was soon after roused from the indulgence of the former, by a pretty strong dose of the latter. For Catherine had not long left him, when her aunt knocked at the door of the library, and craved admittance; which, after a struggle with himself, he thought it advisable to grant her, as he wished that whatever comments she might think proper to make, on his having hung up the picture of his son and his son's wife, should be made and ended in the absence of Catherine.—But prepared as the General was for a burst of no common violence, he found the anger which he witnessed far beyond his expectations, because he had not been aware that Mrs. Baynton would be provoked at seeing such honour done to the pictures of her nephew and his wife, not only because she disliked the originals from a sense of having injured them as much as was in her power, but also because the distinction thus shown them was a proof of the influence of Catherine, that object of her dislike, because she was the object of her jealousy.

But I will not relate the ravings of an angry woman; suffice that,—after having felt her anger much increased and prolonged by the unusual calmness and forbearance of the General, whose temper had been recently ameliorated by the soothing influences of devotion, and his heart softened and humbled by his late scene with Catherine, she had leisure, when she became more calm, to examine the costly frames which had been bestowed on the resemblances so hateful to her; and she hoped that, by finding fault with the General's taste, she should destroy that provoking self-command which her violence had failed to overcome.

"Pray, General Shirley," said she, "may I ask what these pompous decorations on this person's frame mean? They seem to me to designate a *school-mistress*, and would do very well as a head-piece to a card issued to recommend a seminary for young ladies where music, and work, and geography, and all sorts of things are taught by the best masters.—Really, General, if these fantastic ornaments were meant to do your son's wife honour, you have failed in your intention; for as it is well known Captain Shirley married some low person, it will be thought, by these symbols, that he married a woman who kept a school some where in Kentish Town for the children of cockneys." And as she uttered the last word, full of the mischievous pleasure derived from the hope of having given pain, her articulation was impeded by that horrible laugh, which is

in reality no laugh, by which the malignant so often try to mask the bad feelings by which they are governed.

For a moment the General was mortified and irritated by the criticism on the frame, which he had designed in the fullness of a tender and remorseful spirit, and as a tribute to the worth which he had so fatally despised. But the good feelings which had been so powerfully awakened in him still held their influence; and looking his tormentor steadily in the face, he said, "No, sister, there is no fear that my daughter, Mrs. Shirley, should long be mistaken for that respectable character, a school-mistress; for should such a mistake be made, truth will oblige me to say that she was the daughter of a person who kept a lodging-house."

"How! General Shirley, have you no more regard for the family honour than to make such a declaration?" vociferated his sister more vehemently than ever.

"I shall not do it," he coolly replied, "unless the decorations on the frame lead any one into the error you apprehend. — However," added he, "I am far more anxious that the attention of my visiters should be turned to the inscription under the decoration, than to the decorations themselves; as they are my late but heartfelt tribute to the virtues of one I cruelly wronged, and as a proof that those virtues at last wrung from my cold-hearted pride an acknowledgment that *such a wife* was a crown of honour to *any* husband."

There was a something so solemn, heartfelt, and touching, in the manner in which the General pronounced these words, — and what is more impressive than the accents of true contrition! — that even Mrs. Baynton was for a moment awed into silence. But she at length observed, "that all that was *very fine*; but for *her* part she should always rejoice that the General's compunctious feelings towards his son's wife did not come till it was too late for her to profit by them; his being a very convenient conscience, that always stayed away when it was likely to be troublesome."

Even *this* sarcasm failed of its effect; so much had the General's heart been amended by the experiences of the day. But he felt that he had deserved humiliation; and he resolved to bear it, in whatever shape it came, like a sincere penitent and a true Christian. Still, he did not think himself justified in exposing his new-found virtue to unnecessary trials; he therefore told his sister he wished to be alone; and she had no pretence for intruding on him any longer.

Lord Shirley came to dinner; and though on entering the room he was both affected and pleased to see the pictures hung up in the library, he could scarcely forbear laughing at the sight of the angry and significant grimaces by which Mrs. Baynton directed his attention to them, and showed her disapprobation of the situation they held, taking an opportunity at the same time to whisper in his ear, "My poor brother is certainly in his dotage, and that girl has it all her own way."

But she took advantage of the accidental absence of the General and Catherine together, to vent her anger in very strong language; and pointing to the picture of the General's second wife, which hung over the chimney-piece, she exclaimed, "There, my lord, there she hangs! that lovely creature, once the General's idol! And yet he could hang up the picture of that obscure, vulgar young woman, his son's wife, — knowing, too, how much she hated the connexion, and how much she did to prevent a reconciliation, — almost by the side of that admirable woman, who added to her other recommendations that of noble birth!"

Lucy Merle felt all her republicanism roused by this speech, and all her contempt for birth and rank, unaccompanied by virtue. She could not, therefore, endure in silence this contumacious mention of a being whom she had learnt to love and to reverence as the first of women, and as the mother of Catherine; she therefore indignantly and perhaps pertly exclaimed, "Noble birth! she had better have had a noble spirit!"

Lord Shirley looked at the animated speaker with as much astonishment, though not so much anger, as Mrs. Baynton did; who, after a pause of mixed indignation and contempt, said to the earl, "Can you imagine, my lord, to whom that young person was speaking?"

"That young person, madam," cried Lucy Merle, her cheeks crimsoning with emotion, and her eyes looking that peculiar and haughty defiance which Lord Shirley had seen before, but vainly tried to remember where, "that young person is speaking to one who will understand and sympathize with what she says; —Had Mrs. Shirley possessed a noble spirit, she would have tried to heal the breach between the father and the son, and would have forgotten Mrs. William Shirley's want of birth, in her virtues and accomplishments. — My lord, has that young person spoken justly?" added Lucy Merle, smiling as she spoke in sarcastic bitterness.

"Perfectly so," replied the earl; "such would have been true nobleness of feeling and acting, and worthy her noble birth."

"It would have been debasing her birth," exclaimed Mrs. Baynton, "to plead for a degrading alliance!"

"Well, they have both been long gone to their dread account," replied Lucy with solemnity; "and the low and the high born have both received the just recompense of their actions; and *I* have little doubt but that the rejected has at this moment, in the mansions of eternal rest, the precedence of the *rejector*; for who, at the dread hour of judgment, would

not rather be the injured than the injurer! People do not carry their pedigrees with them there, do they, madam?"

Lord Shirley, though he felt his heart entirely on Lucy Merle's side, notwithstanding his aristocratic feelings were hurt by the manner in which Lucy Merle addressed Mrs. Baynton, thought it better to prevent a reply, if possible, from that awful lady, by commenting on the excellent manner in which the pictures were painted. But he might as well have attempted to make a bull-dog quit his hold, as induce Mrs. Baynton to give up an altercation.

"Though you are beneath my resentment," cried Mrs. Baynton, "I must tell you, Miss, that I shall inform the General that he is harbouring in the house a young person of most democratic principles, and who has the insolence to suppose his beloved wife is gone to a place I dare not name."

"Then you will misrepresent me grossly, madam; 'In my father's house are many mansions.' And all I said was, that in them I doubt not but the persecuted would be higher than the persecutor;—did I not, sir?"

"I understood you so, certainly; and I must own that, if Mrs. William Shirley was all she is said to be, I have no doubt you were right; for Mrs. General Shirley was well known to me."

"My lord, I did not expect," cried the enraged lady, "that *you* would countenance such an evident attack upon the privileged orders, as is conveyed by that young woman's remarks."

"Surely, madam, you cannot suppose me so sordidly bigoted to rank and birth, as to imagine that they can stand in lieu of virtues, at the awful time to which Miss Merle alludes! If it be democracy not to entertain such an opinion, then indeed am I a democrat myself."

"Spoken like a man and a Christian!" cried Lucy; "and not at all like a lord," she was going to add, but forbore.

"I hate the *word* democracy as much as I loathe the *thing;* but, oh! to think that my niece has been exposed to imbibe opinions like these!"

"And who exposed her to it?" cried Lucy Merle, indignantly. "Had Miss Shirley's relations done their duty, she would always have been where a Miss Shirley should have been; but let not me be the means, madam, of lowering her in your esteem. Her opinions and mine are, in many respects, totally opposite."

"*Your* opinions, indeed!" replied Mrs. Baynton, with a sneer, "*your* opinions! And pray, child, what right have you to *have* any opinions?"

"You might as well ask, madam," said Lord Shirley, "what right she has to have feelings. May I beg leave to ask you what entitles a person to have opinions, if quickness of intellect and cultivation of mind, like this young lady's, do not invest a human being with that privilege?"

"My lord," cried Mrs. Baynton, "I verily believe that young lady has turned your head, or you could never have defended her in the manner you have done."

"Madam, had your niece been here, she would have had a more eloquent advocate."

"Yes—and I suppose *her opinions* would have been brought forward to shock *me*, and be defended by *you*."

"Have I not already told you, madam," said Lucy, "that Miss Shirley's opinions are different from mine? She naturally imbibed the sentiments becoming her rank in life,—it was as natural for me to imbibe those incident to mine. But whatever opinions she had imbibed, however erroneous, I ask you, Mrs. Baynton, who was to answer for those opinions? Those, undoubtedly, who by their cruelty exposed the heiress of General Shirley to obscure protection and the difficulties of a narrow income."

Though Lord Shirley could not but admire this fluent and undaunted pleader on the side of truth as he felt it to be, and though he acknowledged the justice of her observations, he could not approve the lofty and fearless manner in which she uttered her sentiments, nor the sarcastic and severe glances which she cast on Mrs. Baynton, however deserved. "How different," thought he, "is Catherine to her friend! how meek, how forbearing, how self-governed! And wherefore was she thus? Because with her the faith that she professed governed every feeling and every action of her life; 'it was a lamp to her feet, and a light to her path,' shedding a sweet and constant influence over her thoughts and her temper."

At this moment, when Mrs. Baynton was going to make a bitter reply to this just reproach against the Shirley family, the General and Catherine came in, and the servant announced dinner. But still the dark cloud that lowered on Mrs. Baynton's brow was about to explode in lightning of a fierce nature, had not Lord Shirley seized her hand to lead her into the dining-room, and conjured her, for common humanity's sake, not to continue a subject which must be so painful to the General and her niece.

Still it was in sullen and perturbed silence that she sat down to dinner, while the heightened colour and heaving bosom of Lucy bore evident marks that all was not yet at peace within her mind. But it was beyond Mrs. Baynton's power to be silent long when she was in a state of irritation; she resolved therefore to vent some of her ill humour on the General.

"I suppose you have heard, my lord," she observed, "of the General's preposterous resolution to go to church to-day, so unfeelingly soon after the death of my poor nephew, and

before we have gotten our cards with black edges ready to return thanks for the honour of obliging inquiries?"

"What can black-edged cards have to do with going to or staying away from church?" asked Catherine, in the simplicity of her ignorance.

"Not much, apparently," said the General; "nor is Lord Shirley, I dare say, at all convinced of my sister's superior love for her nephew, because *she* was not so indecorous as to go to church to-day. Besides, had I meant to be called upon, I should have gone to morning service, which I did not; next Sunday I *shall* go to it, and then it will be time enough to issue my black-edged cards. And you will go with us, I presume, sister?" observed the General, sarcastically; "for then I suppose your new pelisse will be come home from the altering."

Lucy Merle, whether out of dislike of Mrs. Baynton, or because she could not help it, laughed aloud at this sarcastic speech, and drew from Catherine a reproachful glance.

"There are many reasons for you yet to learn, my dear," he continued, "why we should or why we should not neglect our devotions; but some persons of a certain rank in life,—the honourable Mrs. Baynton for instance,—cannot think of going to worship the Deity, if forbidden to do so by the god Fashion or the god Custom."

Here Catherine, seeing the storm gathering in her aunt's eye, cast a kind, imploring, expostulating look at the General; who answering it, said, "Yes, my dear, I understand you, and I will forbear; I will say nothing more to irritate; for I am proud to own the power of, and to be governed by, what every man ought to be pleased to obey, who thinks and feels properly,—the kind, imploring look of a gentle, mild woman."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Mrs. Baynton in a tone of derision; "Since when, General Shirley, have you been so fond of gentle, mild women? *Obedient* enough you have been, but certainly not to an imploring look and a meek woman! The late Mrs. Shirley did not lead by a smile."

"No, sister, no; she was any thing but meek, certainly," replied the General mildly, and sacrificing his resentment to the gentle influence of Catherine; "she was a young and beautiful woman, and I was an old fool, that is the truth; but she is gone, and let her frailties sleep with her. She is at *rest*—And so *am I*, I will add, or I know you would have added it for me."

"How glad I am," said Catherine, "that this conversation did not take place till the servants were gone! It was a rule with my poor mother, never to allow an observation to be made, either on friend or foe, in presence of the servants; and she has often said, that many persons wonder that they have given offence to a friend or acquaintance, when, if the cause were properly traced, it would very likely be found to originate in some severe remark which had been communicated from one servant to another, and, having been overheard at the dinner-table, had at length reached the object of it."

"Then it was only before servants, was it, Miss Shirley," said Mrs. Baynton spitefully, "that your oracular and sainted mother disapproved of backbiting?"

"I hope my words," replied Catherine meekly, "did not imply any thing so unworthy of her. I said she did not allow others to talk of persons before their servants; but she herself never talked of them at all, except in praise; 'Judge not, that ye be not judged,' was a precept constantly before her eyes, and therefore operative on her conduct."

"Quoting Scripture again, child!" exclaimed Mrs. Baynton; "really the General, the earl, and myself, shall be forced to get our Bibles by heart, in order to be able to converse with you."

"Whatever be the motive, madam," mildly returned Catherine smiling, "I should rejoice to see you all engaged in so salutary a task."

"Well, you may say what you please," she replied; "but nothing can convince me, child, you are not a downright *Methodist*, a fanatic of the first order."

"You may think and call me what you please, madam," answered Catherine, "for that which I really am, will, I hope, enable me to bear any obloquy—not absolutely unmoved, but without any feeling of resentment."

"It is a pity you can't teach your friend there some of your equanimity, and milk-and-water spirit; for she is fire and tow, aquafortis, and Cayenne pepper; I should think you do not read out of the same Testament, or you interpret indifferently."

"No, madam," cried Lucy, blushing with conscious infirmity, "it is our practice only that is different—I am indeed a 'hearer of the word,' Miss Shirley is a doer also."

"But you both seem equally given to Scriptural quotation, I see."

"It is no wonder, madam," replied Lucy Merle, looking angry, "that Miss Shirley quotes Scripture; for it is said that many of the first martyrs, when at the stake, died with texts of Scripture in their mouth, whence they derived courage to support their sufferings."

"Well!—And how does this apply? Do you mean to insinuate that Miss Shirley is like a martyr at the stake?"

"Yes, madam," said Lucy, rising, and as if summoning all her resolution to strike a hard blow and then depart, looking Mrs. Baynton full in the face at the same time, "Yes, madam; I consider her as a perpetual martyr at a perpetual stake; but alas! she is not so

well off as the martyrs whom I mentioned, for I see before me no probable termination of her trials and her sufferings." Then assuming all the dignity she could, she slowly left the room.

"There, General,—there! there's behaviour! there's impertinence for you!" vociferated Mrs. Baynton. "Now, if you had not heard this, you would not have believed it. But Lord Shirley can tell you, she has said worse things still, and spoken in such a shocking manner of your late wife, my poor sister!"

"What! the lady you painted in such sisterly colours just now, eh? I suppose she learnt it of you. However, I must own that what she just now said was *un peu fort*, and the more so for being true."

"I can only say, brother, that if you encourage your granddaughter to bring her low-born and low-bred associates hither, to insult *me* even at your table and in your presence, I must leave your house."

"Madam, your most obedient humble servant," replied the General; "at your pleasure be it."

"Sir! dear sir!" exclaimed Catherine.

"Well, my sweet child, at your request I will be forbearing."

"What! am I to owe your indulgence again only to *her* solicitation? am I to be here, or not, at her will and pleasure? and are even my wrongs to be unresented unless she bids? I see she is working underhand to get me out of the house, with all her seeming candour; but I will not go, I will not indulge her."

"That is as *I* please," said the General.

It was now the moment for Catherine to interfere if she wished it; but it must be so desirable an object for Catherine to get rid of this perpetual stake, as Lucy Merle only too justly called her, that Lord Shirley thought it was not in human virtue for her to let so good an opportunity pass of effecting this desirable purpose, though he felt that her friend's conduct to her aunt was such as she ought in a measure to resent, however much she loved the one and disliked the other. But could she do this? Lord Shirley thought this was the greatest trial to which he had ever seen her exposed, and he trembled lest it should be too much for her.

When we see the frightful vaulting of a rope-dancer, (forgetting that all he does is by principle and habit,) we are afraid that he will not be able to catch himself on his feet again, but that he must fall the victim of his daring,—and Lord Shirley at this moment felt a similar fear; for, forgetting that Catherine was governed by a principle and a habit of feeling which could not fail her in its operation on her practice, he feared she would not be able, in this trying instance, to act worthy of her former self.

But he found his error when in a tone of voice so soothingly sweet that it seemed calculated to disarm the fiercest anger, she said, "Surely, sir, you would not think of making the innocent suffer for the guilty. In this case my friend Lucy is evidently the aggressor; and so far am I from wishing to bring any friend of mine here to ill-treat my aunt, that, as Lucy has thought proper to insult her in a very unbecoming manner, glossed over to herself no doubt by a sense of my supposed injuries, it is my wish she should stay here no longer, and if my aunt had not proposed her removal, I do assure you, sir, I should."

Lord Shirley's heart exulted when he heard this; and the words "Consistent, admirable girl!" almost escaped his lips. The General looked at her with glistening eyes, but spoke not. And even Mrs. Baynton, overcome by this unexpected and undeserved verdict in her favour, put out her hand to Catherine, and burst into tears.

"My dear," said the General, "be it as you please! Follow your friend, and, if you think fit, convince her of the necessity of her leaving the house. Still, I must say, she is a charming creature, and I love and honour her for her devoted affection to you."

Catherine obeyed; and found Lucy Merle quite willing to go, and convinced that, though her pride as yet forbade her to make an apology to Mrs. Baynton, an apology was her due.

Accordingly, the next day was fixed for her removal. But that night, whether from unusual agitation or some other cause, Mrs. Baynton was seized with a violent illness, and ere morning her life was despaired of. Consequently, as Lucy Merle would not meet her sight, there could be no objection to her staying; as, though unseen, she could be of considerable use near the sick-chamber, whence Catherine never stirred, day nor night; and while the poor invalid's pert, spoiled maid declared herself unable to endure the fatigue of such constant attendance, and took her occasional and quiet rest, Catherine wholly devoted herself to the duties of her office, and resisted even the General's repeated prayers, that for her health's sake she would allow her place to be supplied by some one else. But she assured him that her health would suffer more by the consciousness that she had not thoroughly performed her duty. And, as he saw she did not look fatigued, he acquiesced, though reluctantly, in her decision.

But though unable, because odious to Mrs. Baynton, to be of as much use as Catherine, no one felt greater anxiety for the life of the sufferer than Lucy Merle. Her delicate conscience whispered, that perhaps the irritation of nerves and temper which she had occasioned her, had brought on the complaint; and her self-upbraiding was so violent, and her expressions of it so affecting, that Lord Shirley, though prejudiced against her on account of her principles and her spirit, forgot her fault in the painful severity of her repentance; and when she said, "I'm sure, my lord, I

did not for a moment wish her to be prevented torturing her poor niece, by death," Lord Shirley kindly assured her, he knew she was too humane and too generous for such a wish, and he believed he should see her and Mrs. Baynton good friends yet.

At last, after a struggle of many days, the goodness of Mrs. Baynton's constitution, and the excellent nursing of Catherine, carried her through the illness in safety; and for the first time the tears of tenderness and gratitude fell on the neck of Catherine, as she was supporting the head of her aunt upon her bosom.

When the invalid was able to sit up and be left, Catherine gladly obeyed the General's summons to come down to see Lord Shirley, he promising to sit with her charge during her absence.

Grateful as is the sun after a Lapland winter to the eyes of the Laplander, was the sight of Catherine to Lord Shirley, who, till he ceased to see her and hear her, knew not how necessary to see her and hear her, was to the happiness of his existence.

True, he had come regularly to the house twice or three times a day during Mrs. Baynton's illness, and had fondly endeavoured to catch a look at "the spot where Catherine watched and wept." But he had rarely seen her, though he had sometimes had the comfort of hearing her voice softly whispering her orders occasionally to the servants. But now she was come purposely to speak to him, and she seemed really glad to see him. Nay, more, he was to dine there; and Catherine promised to come and sit with him and Lucy after dinner, if the General would take her station by his sister. During this interview the following dialogue took place between them:

"I hope," said the earl, "that I may own without offence, there is something in you, Miss Shirley, which surprises me excessively, considering the unfavourable circumstances in which, as a young lady of birth and a probable heiress, you were so long placed; and that is, the polished elegance of your manners; for you are not only 'good as you the world had never seen,' but 'polite as all your life in *courts* had been;' whereas your friend, Miss Merle, with whom you have lived during some of the most impressible years of your life, is occasionally ungentle, vehement, and even resentful, both in her language and manner."

"I am glad, my lord," replied Catherine blushing, "that you approve my manners, though sorry you disapprove Lucy's; but the truth is, her standard and mine are different; with her, every thing is republican virtue, amongst which virtues, she reckons freedom of speech, vehemence to defend opinions which she thinks right, at all risks and before all persons, and quick resentment eagerly expressed of any real or fancied injury to those whom she loves. But *my* standard is *Christianity*, which teaches *forbearance* on all occasions as one of the first of duties."

"But this, dear Miss Shirley, concerns *morals*, not *manners*; and I was speaking of the latter."

"Pardon me,—and so was I; for *I* believe the Gospel is the best school for *manners* as well as for every thing else; and that mother, on whose manners *mine* were formed, was of the same opinion."

"This is quite new to me," said Lord Shirley laughing; "especially as I have had my Lord Chesterfield's Maxims held up to *me* as rules for politeness; and I see no likeness between him and the divine teacher to whom *you allude*."

"Nor I, from what I have heard. But, do not the precepts, 'Do unto others as you would be done by,' and 'Be courteous one to another,' lay the foundation of that benevolence in conduct of which, after all, politeness is only the *mimic?* And were we all to regulate our lives by the Sermon on the Mount, would any of us indulge in harsh replies, in ungenerous sarcasms, or in aught that now creates dissensions amongst relatives and friends? not to mention, besides, the new and great commandment, that 'ye love one another.'"

"I cannot say," replied Lord Shirley smiling, that 'almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian,' for I hope I am one, though a negligent one, already. But seriously, you dispose me to say to myself in future, whenever I see an illmannered man or woman, 'Poor things, they are certainly not good Christians!' But still, such perhaps are my prejudices as a nobleman, and one who has lived chiefly with men and women of his own rank in society, that I am surprised to find manners so elegant as your own were modelled on those of a woman of inferior birth, and who had no opportunities of seeing good company, as it is called; for though the Gospel enforces *gentleness*, gentleness does not imply *elegance* and grace."

"Nor did I know that I possessed them. But surely gentleness and softness are two great ingredients towards giving charms to the manner of a woman; and even amongst the lowest ranks, in proportion as the temper is sweet and the heart kind, you will find the manner vulgar or otherwise. My maternal grandmother was lowly born, but she was fine tempered, so was my mother,—therefore from neither could I, on my system, learn vulgarity; and the latter added to her sweetness of nature such a quick perception of what was fitting, and what she heard my father admire, that she profited by the slightest opportunity of seeing things or persons that ever presented itself."

"Go on," said Lord Shirley, "I love to hear you talk of your mother."

"And I to talk of her; and I hope if it be a weakness, it is a pardonable one. It is offen-

sive to hear persons boast of the wealth which they possess; but who would be disgusted to hear a poor bankrupt talk with pride and regret of the riches that he had lost? And I, alas! when I talk of my mother, am like a bankrupt numbering the treasure which is mine no longer."

"I do not wonder, now I have heard you thus expatiate on Mrs. Shirley's merits," said Lord Shirley, while Catherine paused in strong emotion, "that my beloved cousin adored her so fervently, and regretted her as he did."

"No. Nor was it likely he would ever have ceased to love her; for so much did she think it her duty to do all in her power to keep alive in her husband, that tender love in which he could alone find comfort under his father's anger, that whenever he left her to go to sea again, she made it a rule to learn some new language or to play on some new instrument against he returned, in order that she might agreeably surprise him by a new talent or a new accomplishment."

"I cannot *endure* to think that she is dead without my having known her," cried Lord Shirley, with a degree of emotion which charmed and affected Catherine.

"But then," she answered, after a pause of a few moments, "remember, by not knowing you are spared the misery of regretting her."

Lord Shirley, seeing that Catherine was now considerably affected, thought it better to change the conversation a little, by reverting to Lucy Merle.

"You have sufficiently explained to me," said he, "why your friend's manners are what they are, as I have had the honour of seeing her mother, Mrs. Merle, and I know her principles. But surely Miss Merle has real republican virtues—those you have mentioned are no virtues at all."

"Oh yes! she is temperate, frugal, industrious, and self-denying. But then these are Christian virtues also; and though I admire moral virtues as much as she can do, I think them durable and precious only as they are derived from religious belief and the consequence of it. Without that, to me all morals appear built upon a sandy foundation, and are liable to be swept away by the flood of strong temptation. Here Lucy and I differ;—she thinks morality can stand alone, without the aid of religion; nay, she even fancies republican firmness sufficient to enable us to bear affliction. But, Lord Shirley, *C'est là où je l'attends*, to borrow a French phrase; for, if she is ever seriously afflicted, I am sure that she will find her error, and feel that the only refuge in sorrow and in trial are the Rock of Ages and the promises of the Gospel."

"I believe it firmly," replied Lord Shirley.

Here they were interrupted by the entrance of the General, who came to say that Catherine was wanted in her aunt's apartment. But she promised to see the earl again in the afternoon. Accordingly, at the appointed time the General relieved Catherine from her duty, and Lord Shirley again saw and conversed with this interesting and beloved, though as he thought, singular being. But his enjoyment was soon painfully interrupted; for Lucy Merle took up the newspaper, and on coming to a paragraph in it, she gave way to a loud fit of laughter, exclaiming also at the folly and falsehood of newspaper-writers or compilers. "There," said she, "Miss Shirley; read that paragraph, to show you how little newspapers are to be depended upon. Or—no, I will read it aloud to divert you and Lord Shirley." On which she read, "'We hear that the all-accomplished and elegant Earl Shirley is soon to lead to the hymeneal altar his beautiful and amiable cousin, Miss Shirley,' *et cetera*," she added, as the paragraph proceeded to name Captain Shirley in a manner that would have affected his daughter.

"How excessively absurd!" said Catherine blushing a little, but without betraying any emotion favourable to Lord Shirley's wishes, while he, now red and now pale, with consciousness, confusion, and anger, at the liberty thus taken with his name and that of Catherine, could only mutter "very impertinent!—How strange!" and stammer out that he should insist on its being contradicted.

"I can't think what could give rise to such a report!" said Lucy.

"Nor I," faintly observed the earl.

"We have never been seen together," said Catherine; "nor have I been seen at all."

"That is clear," observed Lucy, "or the paragraph could not have been written; for every one who sees you together must see there is no love between you."

"There is no hate, I hope, Miss Merle," said the earl, timidly casting his eyes towards Catherine.

"Oh, no, my lord! but there are many hundred gradations between love and hate—and where love exists, it must be discovered; you know the old Italian proverb, '*L'amore è coma un pozzo in una calzetta nera, sivedi subito.*'* Really, it is a very ridiculous report indeed,—and without any foundation; for, surely, no two people were ever so little suited to each other, my lord, as you and Miss Shirley are."

"Indeed!" cried the earl, turning very pale, and nearly losing all self-command; "that is no compliment to *me*, Miss Merle."

"Compliment! No, my lord, I did not mean to compliment you; but at the same time I did not mean to say any thing offensive. I only meant that in your habits and opinions there seems to be so little agreement, that no two persons ever were less calculated, I think, to be happy, if united."

* Love is like a hole in a black stocking, it is soon seen.

"You seem to have thought much and deeply on this subject, Miss Merle," replied Lord Shirley, proudly; "may I conclude from this, that Miss Shirley entertains the same sentiments, and is as fully aware of what I am sure was a secret to me, that her opinions and habits, and mine, were so diametrically opposite?"

"I, my lord! I entertain the same sentiments on this subject!" replied Catherine, with a becoming and graceful dignity of manner; "I assure you, it is a subject on which I never even thought, much less conversed; and I trust I am far indeed from being guilty of such indelicacy, as to consider whether any man be fit to be my companion through life, especially one who, I can with truth declare, never paid me more attention than was my due from him as a gentlewoman and his relation. Nay, do not look so grave, Lord Shirley," she added, smiling, "I am quite sure that the *much* and *deep* thought, which you attribute to my fluent friend on this subject, is the mere extemporaneous effusion of the moment. Is it not so, Lucy?"

"Entirely so, I assure you; and I was only a sagacious commentator on an absurd text; namely, the paragraph in the paper; and I am very sorry that what I so hastily said, should have hurt your feelings, Lord Shirley."

"Hurt my feelings! Really, madam, this is such an extraordinary conversation, that really—I—But (looking at his watch) I see I have outstayed an appointment." Then, bowing respectfully but coldly, he hastily withdrew.

"What a proud, captious being he is!" exclaimed Lucy, as soon as he was gone; "only think of his being hurt and affronted at what I said!"

"I am not surprised at it," replied Catherine; "nor does his being hurt, at all prove him to be proud or captious. He knows you think highly of me; and then you tell him we are so wholly different, that we are not at all likely to suit each other in marriage."

"Well—that did not prove I do not think highly of him."

"No—not absolutely *prove* it; but when we like a person very much, we are always apt to fancy them like those we love best. I wish you had not said what you did."

"Perhaps," returned Lucy with great quickness, "you are not so convinced as I am of the unsuitability subsisting between you and Lord Shirley."

"Perhaps not; yet, on my honour, it is a subject that never till this moment came before my mind; and I should think it improper to dwell on it even for a moment."

"But he has thought on it, I suspect; and if so, I fear he may succeed. Yet, Heaven forbid! I could not bear to see you his wife, I think I had rather that you married any one else."

"Nay, Lucy, not so; the truth is, you dislike the idea of this union, because you see more likelihood of it at present than any other. You would dislike any man I loved, and hate any marriage I might form."

"True; you are right. The idea of your marrying is indeed a painful one to me."

"I know it, and I can enter into and excuse your feelings;—but be you sure that whenever I love, and am likely to marry, you will be the first person informed of it."

"How generous and considerate!" answered Lucy. "But—"

"This is a subject we had better drop," said Catherine. "But do let me beg you not to dislike poor Lord Shirley."

"As you do not tell me not to dislike him for your sake, perhaps I may oblige you; but indeed he is very proud."

"That idea proceeds, I am sure, from your prejudices against all lords, for to you he is particularly civil."

"*Civil!* Ay, so he is; he seems to make a point of being civil to me, because he feels the difference in our rank, and never forgets that he is an earl, and I only the daughter of a bankrupt shop-keeper in a country town. I dare say, in his heart he says, 'How amiable it is in me to pay so much attention to that young nobody!' O the pride of that humility, how I hate it!"

"Prejudice! Lucy—all prejudice; and it proceeds from your dislike of nobility, not of this individual nobleman."

"Perhaps my opinions may have some influence, and warp my judgment; for I have heard him utter excellent sentiments. Still I am sure, if he marries you, with his high notions of family consequence and feminine propriety, he will never let you see any of your old friends, and he will make you drop my acquaintance for ever." Here she burst into tears.

"Depend on it, Lucy," replied Catherine, "I can never love a man capable of requiring this."

"You will not know it before you marry. Men in love promise any thing; but the husband rarely performs what the lover promised."

"Then I will never marry, lest I learn to think meanly of my husband. But indeed, Lucy, you are again unjust; there are men of principle in the world. And why may I not meet with one? If I do not, rely on it I will never marry a man who is not incapable of requiring from me a sacrifice unworthy of him to ask and of me to grant."

"But you forget that the wife has duties which the mistress has not. Before you marry, it is the lover's place to obey; after, it is yours."

"True; but highly as I estimate the duty of a wife, I believe the duty I owe to God and my conscience to be paramount to every

other duty, and all duties do not merge in the duty of obedience to a husband; therefore I should not think myself bound to give up the dues of love which I owe to an old friend, at the imperious mandate of a husband, or at least not without proper consideration."

"You talk this well;—but suppose your husband knew that you were the depositary of a secret, would your idea of the duty of a wife allow you to withhold it from the command of your husband, if he required you to disclose it!"

"I would never consent to be the depositary of a secret *after* I was married, which I might not disclose to my husband; but whatever secret I had promised solemnly not to disclose before marriage, I should think it my duty never to disclose after, a duty even superior to that which I owe to my husband. Do you doubt me, Lucy?" she added reproachfully.

"No, indeed I do not," replied she sighing. And here the conversation ended. Lord Shirley meanwhile had left New Street in a most painful state of mind; for though he believed that Catherine spoke truth, in saying she had never spoken or even thought on the subject which Lucy had so openly discussed, that very truth was, he feared, a proof of her utter indifference towards him; and the unembarrassed manner in which she talked of the paragraph confirmed this apprehension. And oh! how far did he feel himself from sharing this indifference! The situation was indeed a new as well as a painful one. And did he,—the man on whom the female admiration had been lavished till he sickened at it—did he to whom hearts and even hands had been tendered, sometimes with the surrender of the usual decorum of the sex,—did he at length sigh for one who neither wished for nor was conscious of his homage? Was he at last to receive the punishment of his scorn and coldness to others, by meeting with scorn and coldness himself? Was he at length to be taught to pity those whose love he had rejected, by having his own love met by indifference and disdain?

"Well," said he to himself, "I will not go near her to-morrow, I am determined; nay, I think I will not go again while that prating, forward, democratic girl is there; she will never be my friend, because I am a nobleman; and though Catherine has not her prejudices, still we are insensibly influenced in our likes and dislikes by the opinions of those we love and live with. No—I will not go thither as I have done; and then perhaps she may miss me; yes, yes, I see I have made myself too cheap, as the phrase is." But "to-morrow comes," and beholds Lord Shirley again in the General's house.—He found the friends together.

"I am glad you are come, my lord," cried Lucy when she saw him; "it is later than you usually call, and I was afraid I had affronted you yesterday evening by my unthinking remarks."

Lord Shirley was almost piqued into replying, that he really could not say her remarks were of consequence enough to influence his actions in any way; but his love of truth, as well as his politeness, forbade it; for he felt that her remarks had been such as he could not forget, and that they were rendered of consequence also by their probable effect on another; he therefore merely replied, with some embarrassment, "How could you suppose so, madam? I am not so easily offended." Then approaching Catherine with more conscious gravity than usual, he asked how her invalid did.

"Oh! so well, and so kind! I believe now, Lord Shirley, in spite of your prognostics, that I have conquered her aversion and made her my friend; for she kissed me to-day very affectionately, and told me she believed that she owed her life to my good nursing; what do you think of that, my lord?"

"I think," replied Lord Shirley, "though I am sorry to destroy the hope of your benevolent heart, that these good dispositions will last only as long as does your aunt's seclusion; because it is not so much hatred of you which she feels as it is jealousy; and while you come in no competition with her, she will cease to feel unkindly towards you; but the moment she is again in a situation to feel you as a rival in power, influence, or importance of any kind, then the old feelings will return, and your trials recommence."

"I do not doubt it," said Lucy, "though I see my candid friend does; therefore, before she reappears in all her terrors, it is expedient I should depart."

"Not so," replied Catherine; "I hope to make your peace with her now."

"You are wrong in wishing such a thing," answered Lucy; "I know myself too well, not to know that though we were reconciled to-day we should quarrel again to-morrow; therefore pray let me depart quietly, that you may make the most of the bright days which you are anticipating."

"I think," said the earl, "you show your judgment, Miss Merle, in that desire, as I feel assured that there must always be something volcanic in your friendship with Mrs. Baynton; a tendency to explode, to which it would be unpleasant to trust."

"But I shall be so sorry to lose your society!" cried Catherine.

"I hope so," replied Lucy sighing, "selfish as such a sentiment may seem; but no doubt that you will soon have many new friends to replace me.—Ay, and lovers too, perhaps," she added with a forced smile and a look of great meaning.

Lord Shirley almost started as he observed this; but he could not prevail on himself to ask what she meant. Catherine herself, how-

ever, immediately relieved his perplexity, by begging her to explain her meaning.

"I mean," said she, "that poetical youth, who was presented to you to-day by his father, and evidently with a view that he should become your lover."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Catherine; "it was very natural, surely, for Admiral Dormer to wish to present his son to me, without any secret motive."

"What!" cried Lord Shirley, changing colour, "has Harry Dormer been presented to you to-day?"

"Yes; and he seems a very pleasing young man."

"Pleasing!" said Lucy, "but I do not wonder you think so, as he has written a poetical tribute to the memory of Captain Shirley."

"Has he done so?" asked the earl, with emotion.

"Yes; and very pretty it is."

"I like his verses," said Lucy, "better than I do him, though he is pretty and clever-looking, and modest enough, considering that he has a large independent fortune, and is nobly allied."

Though Lord Shirley was rather displeased with the severity and freedom in which Lucy Merle was apt to indulge herself in speaking of others; still, as he looked on young Dormer as a formidable rival, he was not sorry to find he was no favourite of Lucy's; and viewing her with complacency, he said with a smile, "Poor Dormer! so he also is no favourite of yours? I conclude he too is diametrically opposite to your fair friend in habits and opinions, and therefore wholly unfitted to make her happy in a union for life?"

"I do not know that he is," replied Lucy, blushing; "but this I must say, that in my opinion he is not to be compared to—"

"To whom?" said Lord Shirley, seeing that she blushed and hesitated.

"To—to—you, my lord."

At this unexpected compliment, Lord Shirley bowed very low, and blushed with ill-concealed pleasure; while in his heart he began to regret what he before rejoiced at, namely, the approaching departure of Lucy.

Lord Shirley now rose to take leave, having an appointment elsewhere; and bidding adieu to Catherine, he approached Lucy, and taking her hand, said with great kindness, "that he sincerely regretted her stay in New Street was so unavoidably short, but that he hoped she would be to be seen there sometimes."

"Or at home," observed Catherine, wishing Lord Shirley to pay Lucy the compliment of calling on her; and he, taking the hint, begged to be permitted to inquire concerning her health at her own house.

Lucy, piqued because she saw that this civility originated with Catherine, gave a cold permission; and the earl, rather mortified, withdrew.

The next day, to Catherine's great joy, the family removed to Hampton Common; though that joy was much damped by parting with her friend. But Lucy, aware how impossible it was for her to agree with Mrs. Baynton, made light of the separation to Catherine; though, when she saw her no longer, she gave way to all the agony a mind like hers must feel at exchanging the society of one with whom she could have lived for ever, for that of a mother who was ill calculated to reward by her conversation or tenderness those attentions which her exacting spirit demanded.

Though winter was not the time to exhibit the country to advantage, still Catherine saw reason to be delighted with the situation of the General's country-house, and earnestly hoped that they should not return to London till the first of June, and proceed to Hampton immediately after the birth-day. Not so the invalid, who rather reluctantly admitted the necessity of change of air, for the entire recovery of her health; and who, as Lord Shirley had foreseen, no sooner was able to appear at dinner as usual, and mix in her usual society, but she became piqued and mortified by the deference and attention paid the young heiress, and all her desire to tease and mortify her niece returned. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that as soon as she was entirely restored to health, she should be anxious to leave a scene that was the source of perpetual mortification to her; and that, finding the General and Catherine had determined to remain in the country, she should resolve to return to London. Accordingly, she very soon resumed her residence in New Street.

Her departure spread through the household a degree of cheerfulness and relief which none can imagine but those who have felt the heavy pressure on the spirits that is imposed even by one bad-tempered individual in a family, and have experienced the consequent delightful rebound, when that pressure has been removed! Catherine wondered at her own improved elasticity of motion as she bounded from room to room, conscious that they no longer contained the dark spirit that had imprisoned her's; while the General, the day after her departure, declared that he had not felt so much at his ease for years; adding, "If I could but forget my poor boy, and my cruelty to him and his angel wife, I believe I should be quite happy!"

To Catherine's happiness he fancied Lucy Merle was necessary; and he wrote to request her company now his sister was gone. But her mother refused to spare her so soon again, and Catherine and he were left to the resources of their own minds, which proved indeed sufficient for happiness. Catherine had no difficulty in giving the General her own impressions on all subjects of importance, and her own pious habits and useful pursuits soon

became his. Her musical powers were now called forth to enliven their solitude, and the General heard with delighted surprise, such singing and such playing as he had certainly never heard before from amateur performers, owing to the different views which had led to Catherine's proficiency.

It might be supposed that those ladies or gentlemen who learn music with a view to a sort of public display, would have a stronger motive to excel, and to take surer means to do so, than those who only wish to please the ear of a few partial friends. But vanity is always so impatient to receive its tribute, that it is very apt to grow tired too soon of the labour necessary to bestow excellence. Consequently we see pupils singing bravuras, when they should still be practising *sol feggi*, and playing Cramer's Lessons, before they are perfect in the art of fingering, or the science of thorough bass. But Catherine's mother carried into every thing which she learnt herself, or taught her daughter to learn, that holy love of truth, which distinguished her in more important concerns. "It is not enough," was her favourite axiom, "that one seems to others to understand anything, but one's own approving mind must be conscious that we really know it." On this principle, therefore, and from the simple love of truth and excellence, Catherine went through all the practical and mental drudgery necessary to enable her to excel in every branch of music, and as she rose very early and her time was not frittered away in idleness, visiting and amusements, the hours which she bestowed on music, bore only their fair and relative proportion to those that she gave to graver studies. It was the purity of the motives, probably, which led her to seek such excellence in this art, that prevented her from feeling the vanity usually attendant on it. Besides, in this, as in her religious habits, Catherine was quite ignorant, from the seclusion in which she had lived, that others were not in the habit of thinking and acting as she did, and she was no more conscious that her musical knowledge was uncommon, than that her piety was.

Lord Shirley, meanwhile, rejoiced at the removal of his relations from New Street, because he considered Catherine as thereby removed for a time from all constant attentions but his own; since his relationship and intimacy would authorize him to pay more frequent visits to Hampton than any other pretender, and he should also have a good excuse for changing morning calls and dinner visits into staying visits of at least two days in length. Accordingly it was not long before he drove down to Hampton Common, and received, as he expected, an invitation to stay a day or two.

It was during this visit that Lord Shirley for the first time heard Catherine display her musical powers, which as he passionately loved music, would have been alone sufficient to have made him court her society; and as it was, they riveted his chains more closely than ever. Reluctant, indeed was he, therefore, to return to London, and leave a spot which the alternation of exercise, reading, singing, and playing, made one of rational and ever-new enjoyment. Even the eccentricity of Lucy, who had once more joined their party, had charms for him, and he forgave her contempt of ancient institutions and her Utopian dreams of liberty, in favour of her devoted love to Catherine, and the fine voice and taste which, as the pupil of her friend, she exhibited both in songs and duets. Nor could Lucy be the intimate associate of such a man as Lord Shirley, without feeling her prejudices against rank considerably softened, and owning that his virtues were almost sufficient to redeem the vices imputed to his peers. The first of June at length arrived; and Catherine, reluctantly throwing off her mourning, prepared to return to London and give her final orders relative to her dress, which was made ready to receive them.

As soon as the General and Catherine arrived in London, Lord Shirley called in New Street; and as he happened to call just as Mr. Dormer, who had preceded him by half an hour, had engaged Catherine's whole and delighted attention, by talking to her of her father, who had been his model of excellence, when as a boy he was presented to Captain Shirley; the earl fancied that Catherine received him coldly, and that her manner to Dormer betokened a particular preference of him. Still, however, though mortified to find how much Catherine continued to attend to her new acquaintance, he lingered near her; and at length Mr. Dormer departed.

But he was scarcely gone, and Catherine at leisure to attend wholly to Lord Shirley, when a note was brought her, which the servant said was from Miss Merle; and on reading it Catherine betrayed strong emotion, and then fell into so profound a reverie that again her noble relation seemed forgotten. "I wonder what that note contained!" thought Lord Shirley, whose tendency to suspicion was easily awakened wherever his affections were concerned—"But, let it contain what it may, it is very certain that I have now received two complete proofs this morning of her indifference towards me; therefore it is better for me to tear myself away from the scenes she is now going to move in; and certainly I will not witness her triumphal entry at St. James's."

While he was thus communing with himself, Catherine had regained her composure, and, turning round to Lord Shirley, with one of her sweetest smiles, told him she hoped he meant to dine with them, as it was so long since they had seen him.

"I was at Hampton only a week ago," coldly replied Lord Shirley; "but I will have

the pleasure of dining here to-day, as I go away so soon."

"Go away!" exclaimed Catherine, in a tone of alarm; "I hope not to stay away?"

"My—my stay will be very uncertain, I believe."

"That is a comfort," she replied; "but I trust that you do not mean to go till after the birth-day?"

"Indeed I do; I shall set off to join my regiment, to-morrow or the next day."

"To join your regiment!" said Catherine, thoughtfully; then recollecting herself, she added with great warmth, "I cannot express to you how disappointed I am at the idea of your not being at St. James's: I expected to feel myself so supported by your presence, and so encouraged by the glance of your kind eye!—My dear lord, do put off your journey, pray do, for the sake of your poor inexperienced cousin!"

Though this kind and flattering address was as much a proof of indifference in one sense, as her inattention to him had been, still it operated in a pleasant manner on his irritated feelings and his wounded self-love; and looking in her face with delighted earnestness, he assured her that, had his plans been even more fixed than they were, they should have been given up at her slightest desire. "I wish," thought he, "I dare ask what that note contained. She has too much habitual self-command to feel such strong emotion for a trivial cause. I hope Miss Merle is well?" he at length said.

"Quite well."

"What fine spirits she seems to have! I trust they are never overclouded."

"O, yes! frequently," replied Catherine with a sigh.

"Love, I think, will never have power enough over her to injure her spirits."

"I am not sure of that; but at present she is, I know, a stranger to the passion."

"The only time I ever saw Mrs. Merle, she spoke of her daughter with much fondness, and told me that *now* she was her only child. She has therefore had the misfortune to lose a child, or children, I conclude?"

Catherine paused before she answered; then fixing a sort of inquiring look on Lord Shirley's face, she said, "No; I do not think Mrs. Merle ever lost a child."

"Then what could she mean by laying such an emphasis on the word *now*?"

Catherine paused again, and put her hand to her forehead, as if endeavouring to remember something. "I recollect now," she replied, "that Mrs. Merle had once a little boy, who lived to be six weeks old." She then talked of something else; but Lord Shirley took an opportunity of renewing the conversation concerning the Merles.

"I have often thought," he said, "that the last three years of your life must have been passed by you most unpleasantly; as you lived with, and amongst, persons wholly unsuited to you."

"On the contrary, I look back on them with great satisfaction, because my mind was considerably strengthened, and my character improved, by the mental discipline they made me undergo, and the necessity they imposed on me of fixing my whole dependence on the only help that faileth not."

"Nay, then; your trials must have been greater than I expected?"

"Perhaps so; or rather you mean by trials, great afflictions; but there are trials, particularly those which are imposed by the bad temper, the petty faults, and even the vices of others, which are, I suspect, more difficult to bear, and more inimical to happiness, than what is denominated an affliction. My only apparent affliction when I came to Mrs. Merle's, was the recent loss of my mother. But under this, how great was my consolation! I knew that 'those are blessed who die in the Lord!' therefore, when I mourned over my mother's untimely death with the weakness of filial affection, I used to check and overcome my sorrow, by the conviction that my earthly loss was her immortal gain!"

Here Catherine turned away to vent the emotion which the recollection of her mother always occasioned her, in a few natural tears; for though it was true that she rejoiced as a Christian, she still sorrowed as a daughter. Lord Shirley did not behold this expression of tender regret unmoved; but he was very glad that no one heard the pious language which preceded it but himself, as he knew that her aunt had prepared the circles in which she moved to find Catherine a preaching Methodist; and he was sure that the most common expression of piety such as this was, would have only served to confirm this idea.

At length she turned round again, as if prepared to renew the conversation; and Lord Shirley observed, that he concluded one of her trials must have been, being forced to associate with persons wholly different from herself in political opinions, as he concluded that Lucy Merle's sentiments on such subjects must have been derived from her parents and their associates.

"No doubt," replied Catherine; "for, independent of the little interest which I take in such discussions, I think that all party spirit whatever is a spirit wholly opposite to that of Christian love and any feeling of true philanthropy, and I used to seek refuge from such conversations in my own room. But Mrs. Merle is a fierce politician; and my disappearance on these occasions, which she attributed to aristocratic pride and prejudice, used to awaken in all its bitterness the violence of a temper never distinguished for its gentleness; and that was indeed a trial of my patience."

"But it is strange that a woman of such sentiments in politics should have been so outrageously loyal as to insist, under such circumstances, on illuminating for a victory at which she could not rejoice?"

"Not at all—if you consider the operations of ill-temper. She vented her spleen occasioned by the victory, in teasing me; and for the sake of indulging her bad temper, she was willing to sacrifice her political consistency; besides, she is an economist, and wished to preserve her windows."

"How freely, however, do I forgive her that last vent of temper and economy," said Lord Shirley, "as it shortened the slow work of time, and brought you to the knowledge of your relations!"

"Yes," returned Catherine, "my transient pain led, I trust, to my lasting good;—But I am sure, my dear lord," she continued, "it cannot be interesting to you to talk of or hear any thing concerning the Merles, and my residence with them. Suffice, that I began there to learn the lesson of patience, endurance, and forbearance, which I am likely to perfect here; a lesson new as it was difficult; for I had lived with none but persons blest with fine tempers; and I am sure that those only, who have lived with the slaves of ill-temper, can imagine in the slightest degree what misery temper is capable of inflicting."

Catherine was mistaken. Lord Shirley was more interested in talking of the Merles, and in the three years passed under Mrs. Merle's roof, than in all the rest of her life; as he feared that she must have been injured in some way by associating with persons so inferior to herself; and he also fancied that some degree of mystery attached to her abode with them, especially as Catherine had talked of trials from "the temper, the petty faults, and even vices of others," and yet she had only mentioned the trials she experienced from the former. But the entrance of the General and Mrs. Baynton prevented his renewing the subject then. And as the misrepresentations of the latter relative to her amiable niece had made her more than usually disagreeable in Lord Shirley's eyes, he took leave soon after she entered, having promised to return to dinner.

The fourth of June at length arrived; and Catherine struggling with the secret load of filial sorrow, saw that time draw near which her exulting parents had so often anticipated; that time, when, restored to his father's favour, Captain Shirley should present his wife and daughter to the sovereign in whose cause he had fought and bled. *Now* those eyes were closed, that would have delighted to behold her admired; those ears were deaf, that would have greedily drunk in the sound of her praises; and she sighed to think how empty are the gratifications of one's own vanity, unless they give pleasure to the hearts of those who love us.

She hoped that she should pass unnoticed. But "Yet how," said she to herself, "can I escape observation? The gallant death of the father will attract notice to the child; and a degree of interest not due to my merits, but, the effect of his valour, must be excited by me in the loyal precincts in which I am going to move."

Catherine was now satisfied that she had found out a point for her humility to rest upon. It was for her father's sake that she was to be noticed; and the feeling was one of tender complacency.

It was settled that Lord Shirley should go with the General in his own landau, while Catherine accompanied the Duchess of ——, who was to present her. Catherine had shown him only on the preceding day, another paragraph announcing their intended nuptials. However, she had blushed deeply when she showed it to him, and she had not done so before; still he wished she had been desirous of concealing, not exhibiting it. Lord Shirley in his heart would not have been sorry for the report, because it might keep other pretenders at a distance, had he not known that Catherine's appearance at court would itself be a sufficient evidence that she could not be on the eve of marriage.

Mrs. Baynton was glad to take advantage of her recent illness, as she chose to call it, as an excuse for not accompanying her niece; since she knew that she should feel no pleasure if she was admired, and might experience considerable mortification.

Lord Shirley and the General reached the drawing-room before the duchess and her fair charge; and the anxiety with which they expected her appearance was probably, though from different modifications of interest, very nearly equal. At length the circle opened to admit them; and Catherine Shirley, blushing at the busy admiration which she excited, and affected at the whispered though laudatory mention of her father's name, was presented to the notice of Majesty, and underwent the customary introduction.

When she had passed on and fallen back into the circle, she found Lord Shirley at her elbow; and soon after she saw the king speaking to her grandfather, and directing an approving eye towards her.

"How well you have gone through this ceremony!" cried Lord Shirley, kindly. "How completely have all the high-raised expectations of—of—the General been fulfilled! Adieu to all our quiet, rational evenings together at Hampton!" he added with a sigh; "now you have been seen, who that can have you at their parties will fail to give them their brightest ornament?"

"But what if I will not go?—what if I prefer a continuation of the evenings you mention?" she replied, "admitting, which I do not admit, that I shall be in such great re-

quest?" At this moment, and before Lord Shirley could reply, Catherine raised her eyes, and met those of a gentleman on the opposite side fixed on hers with surprise not unmixed with confusion. At sight of him she started, and blushing deeply averted her eyes directly, but with a look of surprise; then speaking low to the duchess, she begged to know who that gentleman in green and gold was.

"It is one of the most elegant, captivating, and accomplished men of fashion we have," replied her Grace, "and I am not surprised that you observed him."

"Indeed!" cried Catherine. "But his name."

"Melvyn; he is a man of some family, I believe, and has a very large fortune. But see, he has made his way to the General, and is I dare say saying something that has found its way to the General's heart; so prepare yourself to have him presented to you immediately."

"No, madam, no," returned Catherine, eagerly; "I know,—I am sure Mr. Melvyn will not desire to be presented to me."

"No! But—" Here some one accosted the duchess, and she turned away to converse with a group near her.

In the meanwhile Lord Shirley was enduring great uneasiness of mind. He had seen the expression of Melvyn's face when he looked at Catherine, and hers when she looked at him; and it was thence evident that they had met before. But why should they both look confused as well as surprised? And was this the explanation of the something untold, that had happened during Catherine's residence with Mrs. Merle? The thought was agony; for, of all men living, Lord Shirley felt that he should fear him for a rival; he knew the acuteness of his intellect, and the charms of his manner and conversation.

The General now advanced with Mr. Melvyn; and Lord Shirley was going to watch the countenance both of Catherine and him, when two ladies accosted him, and he was forced to give his attention to them. Catherine received Mr. Melvyn's low bow, deep sigh, and deprecating look, with a conscious blush and a carriage of increased dignity; but still she was more vexed than surprised, when he took an opportunity of saying in a low voice, but loud enough for her, and her alone, to hear him, "can I ever hope for pardon from Miss Shirley, for my presumption of former days? Will she not deign to feel for an unhappy man, who ventured to adore her with a disinterested, though perhaps presumptuous passion, and was the first to do homage to those charms which crowds will now approach with incense and adoration?"

Catherine heard this speech with more complacence than it deserved, because it healed a wound which her delicacy had received; but she replied to him, notwithstanding, in no very courteous language; "Sir," said Catherine, "it will be to the credit of us both, to forget we ever met before; and I will endeavour to set you the example."

The truth was, that Catherine and Lucy had been in the habit of walking out together, unattended by a servant, at an early hour in the morning; and one morning they were overtaken on the Kent road by Mr. Melvyn, who, being struck with their appearance, had left his gig to his servant, and had followed them on foot. From silent he proceeded to loud admiration of Catherine, and had walked by their side, unawed by their cold demeanour, till they stopped at the house of a friend.—There they remained some time; and the maid-servant having assured them there was no longer a gentleman in sight, they proceeded on their walk home; but Melvyn soon overtook them again, nor left them till they reached their own house, at the door of which they knocked in a manner which convinced him that was their home. The first thing, therefore, that Melvyn did, was to inquire who and what the person was who lived there. And from the account the neighbours gave of Mrs. Merle's appearance and mode of living, so different from the elegance visible in the dress and mien of Catherine, it was very natural for Melvyn to fancy the object of his admiration might not be beyond his reach. He therefore took care to watch for hours every day near the house. Whenever the friends walked alone, he followed them, whispering out his passionate admiration; but when they stayed within, purposely to avoid him, he used to walk up and down before the windows; till at last Mrs. Merle, justly offended at his boldness, went out one morning and told him she *insisted* on his never presuming to walk before her windows again, or to speak to the young ladies; for that one of them was her daughter, and the other was under her protection, and she was *fit for his betters*. Without meaning it, Mrs. Merle by this elegant phrase confirmed rather than forbade his hopes; for he concluded that Catherine was the actual or intended mistress of some man who had put her under the guardianship of a vulgar but vigilant spy. Accordingly, knowing that there were only women in the house, he walked past the window again and again. But at last a more formidable champion than Mrs. Merle appeared to warn him off the premises, and Melvyn thought proper to abandon his design.

Catherine and Lucy all this time imagined that the stranger admired Catherine with a view to marriage; therefore, though distressed, they were not disgusted by his conduct. But Mrs. Merle immediately guessed the truth; and her opinion being corroborated by that of others, Catherine was forced to admit the probability of her being right; and her delicacy was consequently excessively wound-

ed, by finding that she had been the object of improper views. But Melvyn's words brought back her original opinion, and she felt disposed to pardon the temerity of one who had admired her when she appeared an obscure and unprotected girl, and not as the heiress of General Shirley.

Melvyn, though he knew not the cause, saw that his apologies were received much better than he expected; and as he soon discovered that the report was false which had declared the earl and Catherine to be lovers, he resolved to follow up the advantage he had gained, and obtain on honourable terms as an heiress, the lovely girl whom he had wished to make his own on less respectable conditions. Besides, he had a double motive for this pursuit, which I shall explain hereafter.

Lord Shirley was all this time talking or rather listening to the ladies before mentioned, and watching Catherine and Melvyn; but seeing the General beckoning him, he bade the ladies a hasty farewell and drew near the General, who had just told Catherine it was time to retire, and had withdrawn her from the side of Melvyn.

The General now begged Lord Shirley to get up the carriage, as Catherine was not to return with the duchess; and leading her from the presence chamber, they went to the top of the stairs to wait till the carriage was announced. Lord Shirley soon returned, to say that they could walk to it; and the General going before them, gave Catherine to the care of her younger protector.

The crowd on the outside of the piazza was excessively great; and as Lord Shirley remarked it to Catherine, she cast her eyes over it. Immediately she started, changing colour, and clung with trembling emotion to the arm she held. Lord Shirley witnessed her emotion with wonder as well as alarm, and asked her if she was ill.

"It is over—it is past," she cried, stopping to recover her breath, "and let us hasten to the carriage;" casting as she spoke, a startled glance on the crowd. Lord Shirley followed the direction of her eyes, but saw nothing to explain her agitation; and in silence they both joined the General in the carriage.

"Miss Shirley was quite ill just now," said the earl.

"Indeed!" cried the General. "But I hope, my dear, the air has recovered you—to be sure the drawing-room was very hot; besides, you must have undergone a great deal of emotion."

"A great deal, indeed!" said Catherine sighing. And Lord Shirley thought the reply meant more than it appeared to the General to mean.

In Pall Mall there was a stop of carriages; and as Lord Shirley put his head out of one window to see how soon they were likely to proceed, Catherine leaned out of the other; but quickly drawing her head in again she became very pale and betrayed great agitation.

"My dear child, you are ill again," cried the General. And Lord Shirley turning round, beheld all the same symptoms of uneasiness renewed.

"Lionel," cried he, "do call to the coachman, and tell him to stop at the first perfumer's shop for some of the best sal-volatile." And Lord Shirley, regarding Catherine with a scrutinizing look, obeyed.

When the coach stopped as desired, Lord Shirley offered to get out for what she wanted; but Catherine catching his arm, so earnestly entreated him to remain where he was, that, though surprised at her vehemence, he acceded to her request. But it was in uneasy thoughtfulness that he did so. Why was Catherine thus violently affected!—and why was she adverse to his getting out! Lord Shirley dared not inquire; and had he even been capable of indulging his curiosity by questions and remarks disguised by that coarse and vulgar banter which many persons indulge in, there was a dignity in Catherine's manner and also in her character which would have awed him into forbearance. He knew, therefore, that he must remain in perplexed ignorance on the subject. But had he recollected that the dignity of character which he observed in Catherine was a pledge of such uprightness of conduct as must prevent her emotion from having its rise in any unworthy cause, he would, though he remained ignorant, have been neither uneasy nor perplexed. But he was unhappily of a suspicious nature; and how can men of that description, however highly gifted and however virtuous, be either uniformly just or uniformly generous?

Catherine's silence was as profound as Lord Shirley's; but this the General attributed to indisposition, which fear was however contradicted by the brilliant colour on her cheek. Some ill-humour mingled with the earl's silence; and as he could not, dared not, interrogate Catherine on the subject most uppermost in his mind, he could not help questioning her on one of nearly equal interest.

"It seemed to me, Miss Shirley," observed the earl, "that you and Mr. Melvyn were not strangers to each other when you met to-day!—you had met, I believe, before?"

"Yes—yes, we had—I had seen—yes, I had seen him several times before," answered Catherine in great confusion.

"Very extraordinary that!—why did he not tell me so?" exclaimed the General. "Surely he could not visit at Mrs. Merle's?"

This was what Lord Shirley most anxiously wished to know, but could not on any account have commanded his feelings sufficiently to ask.

"O! no—he did not visit at Mrs. Merle's, certainly," replied Catherine, recovering her

composure, and relating the manner in which Melvyn had become personally known to her.

The General looked displeased; but he sighed also, for his obduracy had thus exposed Catherine to insult.

"Villain!" muttered Lord Shirley between his shut teeth.

But Catherine heard him, and replied to his term, by observing, "Surely, my lord, you in this instance judge Mr. Melvyn uncandidly, as there was nothing in his conduct to warrant the idea that his designs against me were dishonourable. — Do you think there was, sir?" she added, addressing the General.

"My dear, I really do not know what to think—Melvyn is a man of excellent character; but this I know, I cannot be very angry with a fine young man for admiring you, especially as my conscious heart tells me, that, however derogatory to you his views might be, it was I who had exposed you to such an equivocal situation."

"Not *angry*, sir! — not angry!" exclaimed Lord Shirley, his fine face crimsoning with indignation; "Can you endure to think any man ever presumed to cast an unhallowed look on such a being as that! . . . . Not angry!"

"Whew! whew!" whistled the General. "My dear Lionel, your anger is so excessive, that you have exhausted the family stock, and there can be none left for my use. Well, the days of chivalry are not over, I see, and your sword, at least, would be ready to leap from its scabbard, to revenge even a *look* that threatens her with insult!"

During these remarks, Catherine was experiencing no very unpleasing sensations; though they dyed her cheeks with blushes, and cast her eyes on the ground. For though her delicacy was wounded by the idea that Melvyn had dared to think of her in an improper light, still that delicacy and the proper pride of her virtue were gratified by the manner in which Lord Shirley entered into and shared her feelings, and the noble warmth with which he had resented the supposed insult.

"Upon my word, General," said Lord Shirley, at length, resuming his self-command, "I am shocked at the warmth into which I have been hurried. To be sure, I have no right to resent Miss Shirley's injuries."

"No right!" interrupted the General, "how so? are you not the head of her family? She is a Shirley — and I earnestly hope she may continue so."

The last part of this speech was spoken low; and Catherine, if she heard, did not understand it. But it was not lost on the earl, who, in a transport of grateful pleasure, seized the General's hand and pressed it affectionately.

The coach now stopped at the General's door; and the earl, after handing Catherine out, and venturing for the first time to press the hand he held, re-entered his carriage, and drove home to meditate on his hopes, his fears, his perplexities, and his suspicions. Then his rival! Melvyn his rival!—for it was now clear that he would come forward as such. And if the idea of Dormer's paying his addresses to her was a formidable one, how much more so was the certainty of Catherine's affection being sought by one skilled in all the arts of soft persuasion, and avowedly a favourite of her sex. But was she like the rest of her sex? was she likely to be won by manners, however specious, and accomplishments, however brilliant? No, certainly not.—Still, Lord Shirley doubted, for he was in love; and well has the poet said, that

"The lover is a man afraid——"
"And feels his own demerits most,
When he should most aspire to gain."

Catherine also retired to her own room in order to think over the scenes she had lately gone through; and she could not help being conscious that, triumphant over every other feeling, was pleasure at the animated and flattering tribute of respect and regard which Lord Shirley had paid her, by his resentment of Melvyn's supposed degrading admiration of her; and she was indulging no unpleasant reverie, when she was informed that Lucy Merle was below. She started at hearing this, and desired her to be shown into her dressing-room.

The conference was long and painful; so much so, that when Lord Shirley came to dinner, Lucy Merle passed him on the stairs with her eyes swollen with excessive crying; and when Catherine herself appeared, she looked more than usually pale, though her rigid adherence to truth made her reject the offered excuse for her paleness suggested to her by the General, in the excessive heat of the weather.

But why was Catherine pale, and why was Lucy Merle distressed, thought Lord Shirley; —and his painful perplexity was increased by the consciousness, that, whatever was the cause of these appearances, he had no right to demand an explanation of them.

CHAPTER XI.

Lord Shirley was right in his expectations of what would be the result of Catherine's introduction into the world. The General's door was immediately besieged with visiters, and the tables covered with cards of invitation.

"I should like better to return into the country, sir," said Catherine, "than to remain in London, and run this giddy round; especially so soon after my loss."

But the General had now tasted the delight

of seeing her an object of public admiration, and he could not at present bear to deny himself that pleasure. Still, however, Catherine persisted in urging her request, and at length the General promised that, if she would only allow him to conduct her once or twice to the opera, and to both theatres, he would consent to defer her visits to all the world till the next season.

"But we can easily come from the country to these places, sir," said Catherine; "and when there, we are quite near enough to see frequently those friends, those true friends, who think us worth driving a few miles to see."

"True, very true," replied the General; "and you shall have it your own way."

But Mrs. Baynton was not as complaisant, and she told the General that he and his idol might go by themselves,—a plan too pleasant to them to be objected to for one moment.

Lord Shirley heard of their intended plans with mixed feelings. He would have wished to have been the chosen of Catherine's heart, though she was exposed to the attractions and attentions of other men; and he did not like to owe her acceptance of him rather to her having had no power of choice than to a preference of him. But then on the other hand, his success was made surer by her returning into comparative retirement, a retirement to which he alone had unrestricted admittance. Besides, he felt that to have seen her constantly exposed to the attentions of Melvyn would have given him almost insupportable agony; therefore, on the whole, he rejoiced that they again quitted New Street.

In the meanwhile the world gave Catherine to the earl; while the General heard this report with wonder that it was not true; and the more so, because he was sure that the earl was in love with Catherine.

At length he could keep silence no longer; but taking Lord Shirley into his own study, he said, "I can't endure the suspense to which you doom me, Lionel; for in your heart I see that you adore my granddaughter, and yet you suffer her to remain in total ignorance of your attachment and views."

"My dear General, how can I disclose them when I am convinced that she has no other regard for me than she thinks due to an attached relation?"

"And pray, my lord, what other regard would you have Miss Shirley allow herself to feel for you, as you never even hinted to her that you wished to engage her affections?"

"Oh! but my eyes must have told her."

"Your eyes! she never looks at them long enough to understand them; for, except when she gave her delicate aunt such offence by praising your blushes, her modest eye is usually withdrawn from the face of every man, as soon as she has once testified her respect and attention by lifting it up."

"True, very true, General; however, I am sure that if I were to make proposals to her she would reject them."

"And your pride cannot bear the idea of being refused! Well, Lionel, it is then certain you are not thoroughly and completely in love; when you are, affection will conquer self-love, and you will run all risks. And yet I can't help laughing at your fears; for are you, do you think, a man to be refused?"

"I am afraid that I used to think not," replied Lord Shirley; "but my preposterous vanity is now humbled enough, and I fear that I shall be rejected by the only woman whose rejection is capable of giving me pain."

"Very humble and very pretty," said the General; "and if Catherine were here, she would quote some appropriate text, I dare say."

"Oh! by the by, that reminds me," returned the earl, "that I wish you would give her a hint to be on her guard in that respect, when she is in society, and not appear to be more serious in her ideas of religious duties than others; as I find that Mrs. Baynton has prepared the circles she will move in to find her a sort of enthusiast, and she will incur the danger of being called Saint Shirley."

"Well," coolly replied the General, "that is better than being called Sinner Shirley."

"But, my dear sir, with the generality of the world they mean the same thing; and true piety like Miss Shirley's, firm faith regulating every movement of her heart and every word of her tongue, is so rare a thing, that no one believes in its existence; and as we none of us like to admit superiority in any thing, our dear relation will be deemed by most people either hypocritical or insane."

"My lord," replied the General, "you and I may be governed by what the world says, and, tempted by its dread sneer, may be influenced to seem even less virtuous and religious than we are; but do you suppose that Miss Shirley will? The being who lives in this world considering it only as a passport to another, cannot condescend, I may say, though *she* would not use the term, to be deterred from an avowal of her religious feelings by the dread of the scorner. But I will tell her what you say."

"Tell her what I say? O no! she will resent my presumption."

"No, no; Catherine, I am sure, will overlook your presumption in consideration of your motives. But here she is coming in from the garden, I will call her in; and remember, Lionel, true love never is withheld by any personal fear from considering the good of its object."

The General immediately beckoned her in; and she entered extending her hand with a smile of great cordiality to her embarrassed admirer.

"Catherine," said the General, "here is

your noble cousin in a state of great perplexity on your account."

"Indeed!" said Catherine, blushing.

"Yes; he is afraid, from his knowledge of the world,—a world not worthy either of your purity or your piety,—that, if you do not keep your piety more out of sight, you will be called Saint Shirley; and I beg leave to add, that the interests of religion always suffer by any thing that serves to render its professors ridiculous."

"If being *nicknamed*, however unworthy I know myself to be of so holy a name, were all I had to apprehend from language which I have only recently learnt to be peculiar, I should not, much as I respect Lord Shirley's opinion, be inclined to alter it. But I feel with you, that the cause of religion itself suffers by any eccentricity, however harmless, in the conduct or manners of its professors. And if I must associate with the world, I see that I must, in trifles at least, not go counter to its ideas. Yes, you are both right, my dear lord, and I sincerely thank you, grandfather; assuring you at the same time that I will endeavour to reform."

"Would, on the contrary, you could reform others, and make them like you!" replied the earl.

"I should think it presumptuous for me to attempt it, or even to believe it advisable. No; all I can do I will, and that is, not run any risk of bringing religion itself into contempt by exposing it in my person to scorn. No, Lord Shirley; no; I will not 'sing the Lord's song in a strange land.' Do forgive me this one quotation, and in future act as the representative of this terrible world, that loves not to hear of things that are holy, except once a week from the pulpit of a fashionable preacher."

"But how can I represent that world with whose feelings and opinions I have, on this occasion, nothing in common?"

"Except," said Catherine smiling, "its love of appearances, and conformity to established customs. But I admire your candour and your friendly boldness in speaking this opinion at the risk of displeasing me. O Lord Shirley! dear Lord Shirley! surely you were intended for something better than to be a man of the world!"

Lord Shirley was too much and too pleasantly moved by these words to articulate an answer; he only pressed her hand respectfully to his lips. "Yes," thought he to himself, "I think I am intended for something better, and I hope I was intended to be the husband of you, excelling creature!" But an unaccountable, or rather a lover-like timidity still restrained the avowal of his feelings.

Catherine's first appearance after the birthday was at the Opera on the Saturday night, whither she accompanied the Duchess of C——; and great was the surprise, real or affected, of the misses who beheld her, not to see her (now she was not obliged to appear in a certain costume as at court) dressed in pale pink, and her fine dark hair wreathed with Maltese roses; as Mrs. Baynton's representations had led them to expect to see her in the simple and peculiar dress of a Moravian or a Methodist.

Lord Shirley was prevented reaching the Opera-house till late, and had the mortification to find Melvyn standing behind Catherine's chair, and laying close siege to her attention, if not to her heart. He had dared to tell her not only that the report of her engagement to Lord Shirley was universally credited, but how many heart-aches it had occasioned; and Catherine was only just recovering from the embarrassment which this information gave her when Lord Shirley entered the box. It was therefore impossible for her to receive him with her usual ease and cordiality, and she spoke to him with a degree of coldness which shocked his feelings and called forth his jealousy; for his engaging rival was conversing with her! and wholly unable to contain his sensations, he replied to Melvyn's courteous bow by an almost disdainful defiance; and nearly turning his back on Catherine, began conversing with the duchess.

"I see how it is; I see I was not misinformed," said Melvyn with a deep sigh; "he has all the airs of a successful lover already. Alas! I know my duty, and shall perform it; good night."

Melvyn was disappointed; he expected that Catherine, in all the haughty consciousness of power and beauty, would have so far resented Lord Shirley's evident discomposure by pressing him to keep his seat; but he knew not that pride and resentment were the slaves of Catherine, not her masters; and that, attributing Lord Shirley's anger at seeing Melvyn by her side to his kind resentment of her imagined wrongs, she was little inclined to punish him for a feeling that she respected; and she was in reality very glad when Melvyn got up to go away. She therefore returned his "Good-night" far more cordially than he uttered it.

As soon as he was gone, Lord Shirley turned round almost involuntarily to see how Catherine bore his departure, and how she was disposed to regard him; and to his agreeable surprise he saw her look on him with so sweet yet arch a smile, that almost without knowing it he found himself seated in the chair behind her.

"I suppose you are glad he is gone?" said she in a low voice.

"I am indeed; but you are not."

"Oh, yes! I am; the moment you came in, I wished him gone."

"Indeed! why so?"

"Because I felt it uncomfortable to converse with a man, in your presence, whom you con-

sider as having regarded me in a degrading point of view. Not but that I am sure you wrong him, else I should not be so civil to him. He is very agreeable; especially to me, for he knew my mother; that is, he has met her in company, and heard her sing. How I wish, Lord Shirley, you had known my mother!"

There was so much to please and so much to displease the earl in this speech, that he did not know how to reply to it. At last, however, he said, "Would I had known your mother; and still more do I wish it, since I find being able to talk of her has the power to make a man agreeable to you."

Catherine turned round with a look of marked surprise, and he could hardly help interpreting her look into these words, "Is it possible you can believe I think Mr. Melvyn more agreeable than you?" But she remained silent; and Lord Shirley, gathering hope from the look she had given him, became as pleasant as usual.

Catherine leaned over the box some time absorbed in profound attention to the music; and having, as she retired again, observed several faces and glasses in the pit looking upwards, she asked the duchess what it was that engaged the attention of the audience, and drew it from the stage. The duchess looked at Lord Shirley, and smiled sarcastically before she replied. "I beg your grace to answer the question as you choose," said Lord Shirley in reply to the smile.

"They are looking, Miss Shirley, at a new planet that has been lately discovered, and is now visible to the naked eye."

"Impossible! madam—how can it be seen from that spot?—You must be trying to impose on my credulity."

The duchess looked again incredulously at Lord Shirley. "It is real, not pretended, indeed, duchess," said the earl, again answering her look.

"What is real?" cried Catherine.

"Your ignorance," replied the duchess. "For my own part, my dear," she added in a kind tone, "I have been so used to all the affectations and pretences of beauties, and would-be beauties, and coquettes and prudes, that I own to you I have little faith in the semblance of modesty, and am more inclined to believe a woman hypocritical than humble. But Lord Shirley, who knows you better than I do, assures me you are honest, and that you are not pretending, but feeling ignorance and unconsciousness at this moment."

"I never at this, or at any other moment, madam," replied Catherine coolly but proudly, "say any thing that is not true; and I am wholly at a loss to know what your grace means."

"Then I will explain;—The good people below,—ay, and all around the house, I believe,—are looking at a new planet, first discovered in the Shirley family. Do you understand me now?"

"To be sure I do," said Catherine drawing back, and dyed with blushes such as no art could imitate, no hypocrisy feign.

"I am quite convinced now, Shirley," said the duchess laughing; "but indeed, Miss Shirley, if you retire from admiration so pointedly, I shall think you affected in one way."

"Perhaps," replied Catherine thoughtfully, "it will be more proper and delicate not to seem to notice it; but it is very natural that they should look at me, because I am a new face, and with something of the romantic attached to my story, and also on my poor father's account."

She then resumed her station in front; and the duchess looked at Lord Shirley again, but with a different expression, and one most truly gratifying to his feelings; for the duchess was worthy to know, and capable of appreciating Catherine's character when once known; though, as is sometimes the case, she had, like others, been prejudiced against her by the representations of her own family.

"It is remarkable to me," said Catherine in a very low voice to the duchess, "that many who talk offensively loud during the music, should be silent as the grave when the dancing is going forward; and that women sit absorbed in motionless attention, when really, one would think, they would be glad to turn their heads away."

"O thou poor novice!" replied the duchess smiling—"But such is the power of habit, that I doubt not by this time twelvemonth you will see nothing indecent in the dancing, and will very likely talk during the opera."

"The latter, my love of music will always forbid, and if it be really in the power of habit to conquer my sense of decency, I will not frequent the opera—I will not give habit an opportunity of so operating upon me,—for, if once a woman allows any thing to deprive her of her nice sense of propriety, tell me if you can whither her degradation may not in time extend."

"Oh! now the true nature peeps out," replied the duchess smiling; "I was told you were a methodist preacher in petticoats, and I am very glad you have favoured me with a specimen of your art. But pray do not preach to me, for if you do you will certainly convert me; for the little I have yet seen of you has inclined me already to believe that all you do and feel, is 'wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.'"

"With the hope of converting your grace before my eyes, can you possibly imagine I shall obey the prohibition, and cease preaching?" said Catherine, laughing.

Lord Shirley, who had gone to the opposite side of the house, now returned; and telling the ladies, if they wished to get into the room without being painfully squeezed, they had

better go directly and before the curtain fell; he offered an arm to each, and just before the crowd began to assemble he went in search of the carriage, but the ladies soon found their situation a most unpleasant one. The beauty and novelty of Catherine soon made her the universal attraction, and the duchess and herself were so painfully pressed upon, that they were glad to accept the offered protection of Melvyn, who with some difficulty kept the crowd a little off them.

"But where is the happy Shirley?" said Melvyn; "why has he deserted his charge?"

"Lord Shirley has gone to see for the carriage."

"And when he returns must I resign you to him, madam, or are you not too much aware how flattering to him, and how full of confirmation to the report of the world, his leading you to the carriage would be to venture so decided a step?"

"Sir, Lord Shirley, in the absence of my grandfather, who was too unwell to accompany me, is my natural protector, because he is my nearest relation, and when he comes I shall certainly claim that protection."

"It is very strange he should have withheld it when it was so much needed. But here he is."

However, though in sight, Lord Shirley did not come near them; but giving his arm to a very beautiful woman, returned again, as if going to see her to her carriage.

"Cool enough, that!" muttered Melvyn; "but I suppose she insisted upon it. Well, Miss Shirley, the world will now conclude Lord Shirley is secure of you, by this public neglect."

"Neglect, sir! neglect! I cannot see his conduct in the light you do, nor should I approve of Lord Shirley's being rude to another woman in order to attend on me; no doubt the lady he is protecting has claims on him."

"No doubt," returned Melvyn sarcastically.

The duchess was, during this conversation, talking to a lady near her, but now turning round, she expressed her surprise that Lord Shirley was not come back.

"He is gone," said Melvyn with a significant smile, "to see Miss Clermont to her carriage."

"Oh! that," she replied, "is a piece of civility which he could not avoid." On which she beckoned the duke her husband, who succeeded in making his way up to her before Lord Shirley did.—"Here, duke," said she, "do you take Miss Shirley under your protection, while I take Mr. Melvyn's arm; and then let us go and meet Shirley, who has been to get up the carriage."

This arrangement dissipated the angry gloom which was gathering on Lord Shirley's brow, from apprehension lest Catherine should take the arm of Melvyn; and as the Duke conclusively resigned her to his care as soon as he reached them, the earl composed his troubled features, and even wished Melvyn good night in a kind tone when they parted at the door of the Opera.

"I wonder who Miss Clermont is, and what her claims on Lord Shirley can be," thought Catherine, when she retired for the night; "she is very beautiful, and it is no wonder he saw her to her carriage." But Catherine could not forget the expression of Melvyn's countenance when he mentioned her; and Catherine certainly did not go to sleep that night as soon as usual. Still, she was not at all aware that she was on the point of feeling more interest in Lord Shirley than her sense of propriety would have allowed her to feel; for, as yet, the preference was not decided enough to deserve the name of a *partiality*.

The next morning, as soon as decorum warranted, Lord Shirley was in New Street, and he lost no time in talking of the opera of the night before, while the General listened to his description of the admiration which Catherine had excited.

"I wish I had been there to have witnessed it!" he exclaimed—"My dear Lionel, how you must have enjoyed your evening!"

"I cannot say so, sir, for Melvyn was talking in Miss Shirley's ear when I entered the box; and had not the duchess taken his arm, he would have handed her to the carriage, I believe."

"Why, where were you then?"

"I was gone to call up the coach," replied Lord Shirley, blushing. "But, sir, is it not clear that, if Miss Shirley did not like him, she would not allow him to speak to her, and attend her in the way he does? for, would she not remember with pain his former presumption? True, she thinks his views were honourable; but were she not partial to him, would she not in this instance be governed by the opinion of others?"

"I own there is something in what you say; and as it is most likely Melvyn will be as eager to obtain the hand of my heiress, as the heart of an obscure girl, she must be inclined to *encourage* his addresses, or she would pointedly discourage him; for no doubt he makes a sort of love to her, and has sufficient pretensions to address her."

"I do not doubt," cried Lord Shirley, pacing the room in agony, "but that he does approach her as a lover."

"But I will know beyond a doubt," replied the General; "for I will ask her the question." He said no more; for Catherine entered the room, and blushed when she saw Lord Shirley.

"So, Catherine," cried the General, "I find Melvyn was your beau last night?"

"O fy! Lord Shirley," said Catherine, "I see you have been teilng tales; but I will be even with you. My dear sir, if Mr. Melvyn had not stepped in to our assistance, the duch-

ess and I might have been squeezed to death in the crowd,—a danger wholly incurred by Lord Shirley's desertion of us."

"How! did I not go to see for the servants?"

"Yes, but you need not have stayed away so long. Was it absolutely necessary for you to hand Miss Clermont to her carriage, when you were the promised beau of the Duchess of C—— and myself?"

"And *did* he do this?"

"O, yes; he did."

"Upon my word, Lionel," cried the General, laughing, "you are a sly fellow, and did not tell tales of *yourself*, certainly. Well, I think Melvyn was very right in filling the place you had abandoned. Poor Sophy Clermont! it was kind in you, indeed!"

Lord Shirley looked foolish, and only uttered, "Nonsense, stuff!"

"But, my dear," said the General, gravely, "the wonder is, not that Melvyn should wish to pay you attention, but that you should *suffer* his attentions, as he must, I conclude, be all but a declared lover. Therefore, unless you mean to accept him, you should keep him at a distance."

"Is it possible, sir," cried Catherine, "that you can suppose me likely to allow Mr. Melvyn to converse with me, if he were in any degree approaching the character of a lover?—No, sir; it is because he has no such pretensions, that I think it right to treat him with the civility due to every gentleman."

"No such pretensions, Catherine!"

"None. He has candidly told me that when he followed me in the street, and behaved so absurdly, he hoped to prevail on me to listen to his honourable and disinterested addresses, for he then thought me his inferior. But the severity with which Mrs. Merle treated him, and I regarded him, convinced him his suit would be hopeless; and when he was so firmly forbidden (here Catherine blushed, and hesitated in her speech,) never to walk before the house, again, he was resolved to conquer a regard that promised only to make him miserable; and he *did* conquer it."

"Does he say so?" asked Lord Shirley.

"Well," said the General, "I do not see, after so frank and honourable an avowal, and so complete an exculpation, how Catherine, as a delicate woman, can refuse to listen to him. Indeed, if she did not, it would seem as if she was piqued at his not renewing his addresses."

"So *I* think," observed Catherine.

"I wish I thought so too," said Lord Shirley, sighing; "but I dare say I ought to think so, and that I alone am to blame; so let us call another subject. You return to Hampton to-morrow, I think, and mean to come back again on Friday to go to Vauxhall, if the weather be fine."

"We do, my lord; and Lucy Merle goes back with us also."

"Indeed! Lucy Merle going back with them!" said Lord Shirley to himself, as he returned home; "I wonder how *she* likes Melvyn! I hope she understood, and consequently resents, his former behaviour; for I am well convinced he is, and means to be, Catherine Shirley's lover, though he disavows his intention; and probably he hopes, by throwing her off her guard, to steal into her affections. Yes, yes, it is so, I see very clearly. Had I not then better try my own fortune with her first? No; I dare not." And while he experienced thus all the doubts, and fears, and miseries, incident to love, he could not help exclaiming, "Oh, poor Sophia! thou art indeed well revenged!"

The next day, the General and Catherine returned to Hampton, and the day after, Lord Shirley went thither also.

"Now, then, for a few more rational evenings!" cried Catherine, when she saw him. "Oh, how superior is the life we shall lead, to a London life!"

"But, after being used to the incense of general admiration, how can you be satisfied with that of one poor beau, and that one a relation, too?"

"My lord," said Catherine, gravely, "perfumes are fine things; yet some people cannot bear them, and, finding them pernicious, therefore avoid them. Admiration has the same effect on me. I own, it is a very delightful thing; but, certainly, very unwholesome; therefore, I wish to remove from its baneful influence before it injures the health of my mind. Your approbation (I will not call it admiration) has a contrary effect, and is salutary to me, because it is founded, I flatter myself, on better grounds than mere personal appearance, and therefore excites me to persevere in that conduct which first called it forth."

Lord Shirley was nearly betrayed, by the blushing emotion with which Catherine spoke, into an open avowal of his sentiments; but the entrance of young Dormer, and the pleased surprise with which she received and welcomed him, not only prevented his declaration, but also led him to rejoice that he had not made it.

CHAPTER XII.

Friday at length came, the evening fixed upon for their party to Vauxhall; and it was settled that Lord Shirley should escort Mrs. Baynton to Hampton to dinner, as her dislike to appear where her niece was to be seen, and in company with a Lucy Merle, was con-

quered by the wish of exhibiting her still fine figure at Vauxhall, the scene of her former triumphs, and a place peculiarly adapted, by the position of the lights, to heighten beauties, and throw defects into shade. In short, Mrs. Baynton believed it was the only place where she could have any chance for rivalling her great-niece, and her maid had often assured her that at Vauxhall she did not look above five-and-twenty. Mr. Dormer was to be their other beau; but when it was too late to get other attendants, Dormer sent word he was too ill to wait on them; and Mrs. Baynton brought a note from the earl, saying he had just received a command to dine at C——n H—e; but as the P—e was, he found, going to an early party, he had no doubt he could join them at Vauxhall by eleven.

It would certainly have been a better plan to have given up the party entirely till another time; but the evening was so fine, and Lucy Merle was so desirous of going, that Catherine encouraged the General's resolution of venturing thither without any other gentleman; and her aunt, in putting on her new hat and mantle for the occasion, had found them so becoming, that she, too, was unwilling to defer any longer her hour of expected admiration. They, therefore, ordered the carriage, and reached Vauxhall by half-past ten. As they went along, Catherine described Vauxhall as living in her memory, the evening when she first saw it, like a bright vision — a something unreal though distinct, and as unlike a common every-day scene, as the brilliant hues of an evening sky are unlike a ploughed field. "But the second time I was there," she added, "was only five years ago; and beautiful as it was, no doubt, when crowded as I first saw it, it impressed my imagination more strongly the last time." Here she paused; for emotion checked her voice.

"And why so, my dear?" asked the General.

"Because it was a rainy and tempestuous evening; and the gardens were a desert, but a splendid one; and as we paced along the glittering walks in utter solitude, we seemed the possessors of this magic land."

"'It is Aladdin's garden,' cried my mother, 'and that happy child bounding before us, and gazing delighted on all she sees, is like Aladdin himself. But still it is a desert, though a magnificent one,' added my mother.

"'It is no desert to me, as you are with me,' replied my father, tenderly; and I remember as he said this, the wish that swelled my young heart."

"Name it, child!" said the General, solemnly, in a voice hoarse and almost inarticulate with emotion; "for at the moment of such recollections as these, you must know your wishes are sacred."

"O dear grandfather, you could not if you would fulfil my wish. It was, that if I married I might have such a husband as my father."

"True, child—*I* can't realize this wish, but I trust there are others who can.—But go on, tell me more of this evening." "No; I desire, Miss Shirley, that you will not," cried her aunt; "it is very hard on my brother, that when he is trying to give you pleasure, you should always endeavour to give him pain.—How can you suppose recollections of what your father and mother said, especially descriptions of their fond fits, can give him aught but uneasiness?"

"My dear," said the General, while Catherine, almost self-condemned, listened in consternation, "I am the best judge of my own feelings, and I desire you to go on."

"I have little more to say, except that I was much interested in observing the rivalry between art and nature; for with the artificial light of the fire-works mingled the blue and red flashes of the lightning, while the whizzing of the rockets, as they played upon the deep black clouds above us, was drowned in the solemn tones of the rolling thunder. The heavy rains at length converted the open part of the ground into a piece of water, which reflected every object on it, and doubled the sparkling edifices on its bosom. 'Every moment adds to the beauty of this enchanted scene,' said my mother; 'but come, let us go into the unfrequented walks. I fancy myself a queen and you a king there, and as if all these things were created for us alone.' 'I did not think you had been so ambitious, or that the dream of ambition had had such charms for you,' said my father. 'I never was ambitious but for your sake,' she replied; 'and were this fancied empire mine, I should prize it only that I might give it to you."

"A truce with this stuff, I beg, Miss Catherine," exclaimed her aunt; "really this fulsome fondness in old married people was bad enough originally, but is odious second-hand, and I can't bear it."

"Nor I any longer, for better reasons," observed the General. "It awakes compunction in *me* even to madness; for, had *I* been a father, this sweet and holy union, as I call it, would perhaps have existed still."

"It was the will of heaven," said Catherine solemnly and fervently, "to dissolve it here, and even regret is consequently forbidden us; but I believe it was in order to cement it eternally."

Silence, entire silence, succeeded; or rather silence interrupted merely by Mrs. Baynton's angry and indistinct broken murmurs of "makes me sick," "pompous piety," "affected sanctity," "no feeling."

But at length they reached the place of their destination; and when they entered the garden, the General took Catherine under his arm. Then turning round, he said in a voice

that spoke he would be obeyed, "Sister, do you protect Miss Merle!"

"I, brother! and who is to protect me?" she replied; walking on.

"Protect you! nonsense!" cried the General with a look of such comic and arch contempt, that Lucy could scarcely help laughing while she offered Mrs. Baynton her arm. But she rejected contact so unworthy the noble blood of a Shirley, and walked along wholly disregarding her. Lucy however kept close to her, as she was really rendered uncomfortable by the attention which she excited; and Mrs. Baynton soon found Lucy was not only a most odious companion to her, because she was a mere nobody, but a powerful rival.

While they were close behind the General and Catherine, and seemed to belong to them, there was no danger of Lucy Merle's being improperly accosted; but when forced by the crowd to a little distance from them, different groups of men walked alongside of, or followed her, and were lavish and loud in commendation of her beauty; while the terrified girl clung to Mrs. Baynton's arm in spite of her resistance, and could hardly forbear seizing the arm of the General.—Still, however imperfectly and reluctantly, Mrs. Baynton did the office of chaperone; her lofty and majestic height, her commanding carriage and her cross countenance, served in some measure to protect her companion from insults. But nothing can awe a drunken man; and at length a youth elevated by wine came up to Lucy and begged her to take his arm, and leave that old Sibyl to whom she was clinging.

An appeal to the General was now unavoidable. But just as she was springing forward to make it while Melvyn's agreeable conversation had so wholly engrossed Catherine and him, that they had forgotten who followed them, Lucy felt her arm seized and forcibly disengaged from her assailant; and looking up, beheld Lord Shirley, who fiercely commanded her tormentor to disappear directly. The drunken man is usually valiant; but as the one in question recognised the earl immediately, he thought it advisable to obey; and Lucy hung trembling on the arm he gave her, while he offered the other to Mrs. Baynton.

Impatience and more wine than he commonly drank had flushed Lord Shirley's face with even brighter hues than usual, and given his eyes additional lustre; but a look of anger altered their wonted expression, when he saw Melvyn by the side of Catherine, and beheld how completely her attention and that of the General were absorbed in what he was saying.

"Has Melvyn been with them the whole evening?"

"Almost," said Mrs. Baynton. "It is very strange, I think, that my brother should suffer such a flirtation."

Lucy, not hearing what she had said, observed in a low voice to Lord Shirley, "It is very odd Miss Shirley can bear to converse with that man."

"Then he has not the happiness of pleasing you, Miss Merle?"

"No, indeed! I cannot tell why, but I do not like his countenance; it is not ingenuous, I think."

When she said this, Lord Shirley felt so favourably inclined towards her, that he turned round to look at her, and was really astonished into temporary silence by her beauty. Her height, her high colour, the brilliancy of her eyes, the spirit of her countenance, and her black hair, which, though it curled naturally, was cut close to her head, and showed the turn of the latter, and of her long and finely formed throat,—all together made her an object too striking and too lovely to be passed unnoticed; and he no longer wondered that she was, while unprotected, exposed to impertinent admirers.

"Yes, yes; I remember now you are a physiognomist," said he kindly; "and I am afraid of you myself; therefore I beg you not to look at me with those formidable eyes."

"You, my lord," said Lucy warmly, "have nothing to fear from any physiognomist however skilful."

"I thank you," said Lord Shirley bowing and laughing, while a blush of pleasure kindled on his cheek—"I thank you in the name of the privileged orders, for this great concession in favour of one of their body."

Mrs. Baynton had, during this time, been endeavouring to call the attention of the General and Catherine, and inform them that Lord Shirley was arrived,—but in vain; as the earl, piqued at finding that they were not looking for him, insisted on it that his arrival should not be announced to them. But at this moment he heard Catherine say, as she stopped to adjust some part of her dress, "I cannot think where Lord Shirley is! I am afraid he will not come at all!" Then turning to speak to Lucy, she started and blushed with pleasure to see the earl so near her.

"How late you are, Lionel!" said the General, making a motion as if to surrender his place to him. But Lord Shirley did not choose to see it; and coolly saying that he had been come some minutes,—after hoping Catherine was well, he stooped to speak in a low voice to Lucy Merle. The General looked surprised, and Catherine hurt; but the former saw evidently that jealousy occasioned the coolness in the earl's manner, and he was resolved not to take notice of it, but walk on as they were. While Catherine imputed his conduct merely to displeasure at seeing her persist to encourage the attentions of Melvyn, and to be with him in public; and the idea of acting contrary to Lord Shirley's ideas of propriety was so painful to her, that she fell into an uncomfortable silence, whence even the brilliant con-

versation of Melvyn was unable to raise her entirely.

"I wish that man would leave Miss Shirley!" said Lucy.

"But do you think she wishes it?"

"I hope so; if I did not, I should be miserable; if I thought she liked him and approved his addresses, I should be more hurt and disappointed than I can find words to express."

"Dear, charming, enthusiastic girl!" cried Lord Shirley pressing her arm to his side—"would that your friend on this subject thought and felt as properly as you do!"

There was now a great throng from the meeting of two crowds endeavouring to get into one of the rooms, and meeting a third crowd coming out; Lord Shirley therefore thought it best to give way and wait till the great pressure was over.

"Impossible, my lord!" cried Mrs. Baynton; "we shall lose our company."

"Better our company than our lives, madam," said Lord Shirley; "and even a genteel crowd is a formidable thing."

At this moment a sudden rush convinced her he spoke truth; and Mrs. Baynton was contented to wait his pleasure. At length the crowd diminished; and as her own party were still tolerably near, Mrs. Baynton was satisfied, especially as she was leaning on the arm of her noble and admired relation; nay, Lucy Merle herself, probably in spite of her democratic principles, was not sorry to be seen under the care of the handsomest young nobleman then in the peerage. But if poor Lucy really had this feeling, she was soon punished for her pride, and humbled accordingly; for just as a sudden and unusual clear space lay before them, calculated to display every one at full length, so that no one however insignificant could pass unheeded, a group of vulgar-looking girls, accompanied by one man, appeared to the startled sight of Lucy Merle; and one of the girls exclaimed, "Well, I declare, if there is not cousin Lucy Merle! And how smart she is!"

"Well, my dear, I am so glad to see you," said she, coming up to her and shaking her hand.

"How are you, Dorothy?" said Lucy, summoning all her energies, and recollecting her principles, to enable her to bear with fortitude this trial of her humility.

"Well, I dare say you were never here before? What a fine place it is!—This is my cousin Lucy Merle, Jack, (introducing her to the youth she leaned on,) and this is our neighbour White's daughter."

"He! what a beautiful man that is with you!" in a loud whisper; "a captain, I warrant by his cockade. Who is he?

But Lucy, not daring to name Lord Shirley, pretended not to hear the question, and asked how all her family was.

"O dear! there's mother, she has had the mumps very bad, and her face swelled as big as two; and as to Bridget, my dear—"

Here Mrs. Baynton could endure no more.—"Bridget, my dear," gave the *coup de grace* to her patience; and darting forward, she did not stop till she found her arm linked in that of her brother.

"What's the matter!" cried he alarmed.

"Matter! why, you would bring that vulgar Miss Lucy Merle with you; and now all her vulgar acquaintance are let loose on us; I stayed till I could bear it no longer, and I will not leave your arm, General Shirley, come what may."

"My dear aunt," said Catherine in a tone of alarm, "what has happened?"

"Ask no questions, child," said the General; "you had better not. But let us walk on as slowly as we can."

No sooner had Mrs. Baynton left them so abruptly, than Lord Shirley painfully felt the embarrassment of his situation, knowing how improper it was for him to be seen at such a place with a young and beautiful girl on his arm, without another lady,—a girl, too, whom nobody knew; and who, though very lovely, had not the mien nor the walk of a girl of fashion. It was therefore absolutely necessary for Lord Shirley to break off this interesting detail of family ailments, in order to overtake their company. Consequently, though on this occasion his friendly feelings towards Lucy made him patient as well as seem so, he begged leave to observe, that, however glad Miss Merle might be to see her friends, he feared a long conversation might separate them from their party for the whole evening.

"Very true," said Lucy, checking the "my lord" that was on her lips.

"Ay, so it is," said cousin Dorothy; "and so good night for the present, my dear; we shall meet again in the round. I saw Miss Shirley just now; but she is a great lady now, and she did not care to see me. Do you ever happen to see her now?"

"O yes, frequently," said Lucy; "and—" but here Lord Shirley squeezed her arm to be silent, fearing she might say she was then of her party, in her wish to defend her friend, and thereby expose Catherine to be assailed as poor Lucy had been. Lucy once more nodded her head kindly, and Lord Shirley drew her away.

"I am so hurt!" she said. "But this is folly too, my lord; you knew before what sort of connexions mine were, and you are too consciously great to be degraded by such momentary association. I know I was quite right in stopping to speak to them."

"You behaved admirably," replied Lord Shirley; "and I would out of respect for you have listened patiently to the detail of family evils, had I not feared to injure your reputation and my own by running the risk I mention-

ed; for indeed you are too lovely and I am too well known for us to appear here alone and arm-and-arm, without exciting inquiry and suspicion."

In vain however they walked rapidly forward; they could not see those whom they sought; but they were met by two gentlemen who stopped Lord Shirley, one of whom asking him some frivolous questions, examined Lucy's face in the meanwhile with great freedom.

"Upon my soul, Shirley," cried he at length in a whisper which Lucy overheard, "this is very impudent in you indeed—quite dashing—I could not have expected this from a man of your character, and a man of your morals too!"

"My morals, Colonel, are the same as ever," replied Lord Shirley forcing a laugh; "and so are your manners, I see.

"Miss Merle, this is Colonel Mallison; and this, sir, is Miss Merle, the intimate friend of Miss Shirley."

The Colonel looked rather foolish; but affecting to laugh, begged to know where the Shirley was, as he concluded if she was in the gardens they would have been together. But without waiting for an answer, he continued, "The Shirley was expected at the Duchess of C——'s last night; but some one said it was useless to expect her, for she was no doubt at home reading homilies to her grand-papa."

"Very likely indeed," said Lord Shirley coolly; "and perhaps very true too. Was it so, Miss Merle? were you reading a homily?"

"No; we were reading Don Quixote!"

"What! does the Shirley read such profane books as that? Well, rather she than I—the Don's and his squire's jokes I have no relish for—ha, ha, ha!"

"So I should suppose," observed Lucy sarcastically.

"Why so?"

"Because you seem to have such an unaccountable relish for your own," said Lucy, who had been offended at the familiar and saucy mode in which this gentleman had mentioned her friend.

"So, so, your servant! You are a wit, I perceive; and wit is a very dangerous weapon to wield, take my word for it."

"Is it possible, sir, that you can say this from your own experience?" returned Lucy. While Lord Shirley, though he did not like severe repartee in women, could not help enjoying this; as he dared not resent the Colonel's rude mention of Catherine himself, and yet wished him to be reproved for it. But though he stood still, talking to this gentleman, in hopes that his party might pass them, they did not appear; and seeing a gentleman, who was acquainted with them, he asked if he had seen them.

"Yes," he replied; "I saw them go into the large room not long ago."

Thither then he resolved to follow them. But though they went from room to room and even sat down in hopes they might pass them, their search was still in vain, much to the vexation of Lucy, as she found herself again distressed by the notice of a young man apparently intoxicated, who seemed from his own appearance and that of his companions to be of the rank of a gentleman. Luckily, as she thought, the earl, who was on the lookout for their friends, did not observe his behaviour, nor hear the rapturous compliments which he whispered in her ear. But construing perhaps her forbearance into approbation, the young man still followed her when they returned into the gardens; and when Lord Shirley determined, as a last resource, to stand on one side under one of the upper rooms, where it is scarcely possible, except on a very full night indeed, not to see every one distinctly, this importunate stranger stationed himself by Lucy's side, and begged to know where he could see her again, for that the sight of her was necessary to his existence; and as he said this he seized her arm. Lucy instantly clung to the arm of Lord Shirley, who turning hastily round, beheld and understood what was passing, and desired to know if that gentleman was an acquaintance of hers.

"Oh, no, no! I never saw him before," she exclaimed.

"Then you shall see him no longer," I am determined," said the earl, putting himself between him and her.

"By what right, sir, do you insult a lady under my protection?" cried he.

"I suppose I have a right to admire a fine woman," cried the stranger; "and I shall continue to do so, in spite of you."

"You had better not attempt it, sir." Then, seeing he had evidently taken too much wine, he called to a gentleman who seemed to belong to him, and advised him to lead his friend away, as he should be sorry to be forced to have recourse to violence.

"Violence!" said the youth; "come on, who's afraid?"

The young man hesitated; when another of the party came up and said, "Come, let us prevail on him to go. Come; you are quite wrong, I assure you; and the gentleman you are insulting is Lord Shirley."

"And what then? I am as good a lord as he, an't I? and I am glad he is my equal, for now I can fight him."

"But you must be quite sober," replied the earl, "before I can think of fighting you."

The enraged youth, on hearing this, immediately darted forward; but Lucy threw herself between him and Lord Shirley, and received the intended blow on her shoulder. This sobered him a little; and, giving way to

rapturous lamentations, he fell on his knees to her.

A crowd had now gathered; and his companions raised up the prostrate admirer; who, taking his card from his pocket, gave it to the earl. "There," said he, "you see I am no boaster—The Earl of Livesay."

"And here is my card," coolly replied Lord Shirley; when looking up, to his great joy he saw his own party coming, and without Melvyn, who had left them some minutes, finding his efforts vain to overcome Catherine's taciturnity.

As soon as Lucy saw Catherine, she ran up to her and burst into tears, which shocked Lord Livesay's companions so much, that they took him away by force; for they now found that, though certainly in a suspicious situation, Lucy, whoever she was, was a respectable young woman.

"So, madam," said Lord Shirley, angrily, to Mrs. Baynton, "and is it thus you forsake your duty? Was it kind, was it womanly, to leave a young and beautiful girl without a protector of her own sex, with a young man of my age and rank at a place like this?"

"Dear me! do you suppose I thought that young person under my care? Besides, I concluded she was not very nice, and that she would think you sufficient protection. If not, she could go I knew to her cousins, Dolly and Bridget, and so forth."

"But, madam, if, in protecting Miss Merle, my life was endangered, I believe you will allow that it would have been as well if you had afforded her your protection. This is beyond a joke, madam, and never did I find myself in so disagreeable a predicament before."

"My dear lord," cried Catherine, "what is all this?" and as she spoke, she drew her arm through his.

"It was a base and cruel desertion of an unoffending girl, and I cannot yet forgive it, indeed I cannot."

Lucy, in the meanwhile, taking the General's arm, had whispered in his ear, "Oh, sir, they have exchanged cards — indeed they have."

"Who, my dear?"

"Lord Shirley and Lord Livesay."

"And what for? what is all this about?"

"Oh, sir, they quarrelled about me—But cannot you make it up?"

"I hope so. I knew this boy's father, but I don't know him."

"Oh, sir, I can show him to you."

"True, so you can; therefore we will fall behind, and then get from them unnoticed."

Lord Shirley was then walking between the aunt and niece; but too angry with the former to give her his arm, and too much engrossed with telling Catherine what he chose to tell her of his adventures with Lucy, to heed the disappearance of the latter with the General, especially as Catherine had most earnestly assured him that the pleasure of her evening had been entirely spoiled by her fruitless expectation of him.

The General and Lucy found Lord Livesay in the upper box, under which the fracas had taken place; and he was drinking tea, which had brought him a little to his senses.

"My Lord," said the General, putting Lucy behind him, as he could scarcely bear to see without resenting it the audacious manner in which the earl was going to accost her—"My lord, I believe I have the honour to address the Earl of Livesay?"

"Yes, sir! you have." Then trying to pass the General, he endeavoured to approach Lucy.

"Stop, young man!" cried the General, in a tone and manner that commanded silence, "and presume not to insult a woman under the protection and care of General Shirley."

"General Shirley! O, zounds! I believe I am in the wrong box here. Sir, (taking off his hat,) I beg your pardon, sir, and the lady's under your protection. Egad, the Shirleys have it all their own way to-night."

"My lord," said the General, "I am in no humour for joking, nor are you in a condition to be responsible for the consequences of a joke; and I am come to speak seriously to you, or to any friend of yours capable of understanding me."

"Sir," said a young man, respectfully, "I will attend to any thing you say, and repeat it faithfully to Lord Livesay to-morrow."

"No, no, stand on one side; I will hear to-night what this noble-looking old gentleman has to say myself."

"Boy, I knew your father; and a finer fellow, and a more gallant spirit, I never met with in my life."

"Did you — did you know my father?" cried the youth, seizing his hand. "Then you knew the best of men and of parents, and it was a sad day for me when I lost him!" Here he burst into tears, and it was some minutes before he recovered himself. "Well, and so you liked him, did you? God bless you! I honour everybody that honoured my father."

"You had better honour him yourself, young man, by endeavouring to follow his example. Would *he*, do you think, have come intoxicated to a place of public resort, and, not contented with insulting a young lady, have defied and insulted the brave man who defended her?"

"No, he would not indeed; but what right have you to preach to me? However, as you were my father's friend, I forgive you; but you must know, I did not take her to be a lady. But as to insulting Lord Shirley, why he insulted me first; and I declare, after he knew I was a lord, and his equal, he was as insolent as he was before."

"His equal!" cried Lucy, indignantly.

"There! did you hear that?" asked the young earl.

"Be silent, my dear," said the General, in a low voice; "recollect that as Lord Shirley's life may be in some danger, it is better for us to smooth than irritate."

On hearing this, the colour faded entirely from her cheek; and Lord Livesay exclaimed, "Why she is as pale now as she was red before; and I believe she cannot help that suspicious-looking bloom."

"Let the young lady and her bloom alone, my lord," resumed the General; "you shall see both again at a more convenient opportunity, if you will allow me to bring you to reason. I am convinced that the son of my old friend is a gentleman, though the influence of wine has altered him for the time being."

"A gentleman! To be sure I am; and whoever says I am not, must fight me. Lord Shirley treated me as if I were no gentleman, and he must fight me."

"Not if I can help it; for it would grieve me to be second in a duel between my noble cousin and the son of a valued friend. No, no! you must not fight, but you must learn to like each other."

"Yes, when we have fought, if we are not killed, we will shake hands and make it up."

"Dreadful!" said Lucy, and sunk nearly fainting against the General's shoulder. "Oh, sir!" she faintly articulated, "if Lord Shirley should be killed, I should never recover it!"

"But he will not even fight. Lord Livesay, can you see this sweet creature's agony unmoved, and do you not owe her some compensation for the pain and confusion you have occasioned her?"

"To be sure I do. What can I say to her? Pray forgive me?"

"That is sufficient for her; but surely some apology is due to Lord Shirley."

"And to me too, if you come to that, gentlemen," said the General, "how did the earl behave?"

"Very coolly and very properly," replied one of them, "and begged us to take our friend away, lest he should forget himself."

"Then, gentlemen, you will, I trust, assist me in making up this foolish quarrel?"

"Certainly. But Lord Livesay aimed a blow at Lord Shirley."

"A blow!" cried the General. "Nay then, unless Lord Livesay excuses that on the plea of intoxication, I can say no more. Oh! how grieved would my poor friend, your father, have been, my lord, to see his son aim an insult at an amiable and gallant nobleman, which with some rash spirits must lead to blood!"

Lucy hearing only the last words, was so terrified that she sunk nearly in a swoon into the arms of one of the gentlemen, while Lord Livesay called vehemently for water. At length she recovered, and as soon as she did so she seized Lord Livesay's hand, and conjured him to make concessions to Lord Shirley.

"Young man," said the General kindly, "remember I was your father's friend, and I would fain be yours. You seem too affectionate a child not to have generous and good feelings, and do not run the risk of clouding over the morning of your life by the crime of murder!"

Lord Livesay was silent. At length he said to his friends, "Will it not seem dastardly?"

"By no means; you gave the first offence."

"How do you think my father, General, would have wished me to behave?"

"As I wish you; that is, nobly; for it is much greater to forgive than to revenge an injury."

"Well; and if I do as you wish, you will take notice of me, will you, and sometimes indulge me by praising my father to me?"

"To be sure I will. Well, then, to-morrow morning you will wait on Lord Shirley in person or by deputy?"

"No, no, to-night; let me take the dose at once. I should not be able to sleep if I had the necessity of an apology hanging over my head to-morrow morning; and see, there is the earl himself."

The General and Lucy now looked over the box, and saw the party under it; they also saw a perturbed and even angry expression on Lord Shirley's countenance.

Lord Livesay and his friends were going down to the earl, but the General beckoned him up stairs to them; and the ladies, fearing they knew not what, followed closely at his heels. Lord Livesay was just going to address him, when he started back on sight of Catherine, and exclaimed, "Who is that angel? or that queen? or that divinity?" and taking off his hat, he stood bowing from the profoundness of his respect.

"That is my granddaughter," cried the General, "Miss Shirley."

"So, she is a Shirley too! And I suppose that fine elderly lady is her mother! Upon my word you are a fine family; and though you all look devilish proud, you have a right to do so."

"Pray," said Lord Shirley impatiently, "was it to hear this that we were invited hither?"

"No indeed," said Lord Livesay, "I certainly did not invite you here to flatter you, for I have not reason to like you well enough; but I am told that I behaved ill to you, and that an apology is your due. I have made my excuses to the young lady, who seems as proud as any Shirley can be; and now, my lord, I beg you to excuse the insults I was guilty of to her and you, and the blow I aimed at you. If this be not sufficient, you know where to find me; that is all."

"It is quite sufficient," said the earl; "and

I expected as much from you to morrow, my lord, though not to-night; but I must say that this matter should have been discussed in the presence of gentlemen only."

"Then let us retire."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed all the ladies.

"At least the ladies must hear me beg you, Lord Livesay, to excuse whatever I said that was harsh in the moment of irritation." And taking off his hat he presented his hand to the young earl, who accepted it.

Then complaining that his head ached, and that he feared he had exposed himself very much, Lord Livesay gazed once more with respectful admiration at Catherine, and bowing round went in search of his carriage, followed by his friends.

"How tipsy he is!" said Mrs. Baynton, not liking his calling her an elderly lady.

In a few moments one of them returned to assure the ladies that there was nothing more to fear, for that Lord Livesay was a good fellow, and would be quite ashamed of himself the next day.

When he was gone, Catherine said, "What odd ideas of goodness that young man must have! So a man who insults a modest woman, affronts an honourable man, and comes intoxicated to a public place, is a good fellow! My dear lord," she added, "I hope I shall never hear you called a good fellow, for I should ever after be ashamed of owning you for my relation."

"I trust that you never will," replied Lord Shirley; "but surely having occupied this room so long, we ought to be so vulgar as to have supper; especially as poor Miss Merle looks dreadfully pale."

"Poor Miss Merle has nearly had a fainting fit," said the General, "therefore I think we had better go home directly; and, if you think it right, give something for the loan of the box."

"By all means," cried Catherine, distressed at hearing of Lucy's illness.

"And if your carriage is up let me go home in it, if you please, Lord Shirley," said Mrs. Baynton, "*I* am not going to Hampton."

"Then *I* am," said he, "and you, madam, may take my carriage as soon as I have found it." So saying he went in search of his servants; and soon returning he conducted the sullen Mrs. Baynton to the carriage; and in a few minutes more he was with the two friends and the General on the road to Hampton.

"I could not have slept to-night," said Lord Shirley as soon as they were out of the crowd, "without knowing the particulars of your conference, General, with my antagonist; but I suspect that I owe the pacification to my fair friend here, whose whole conduct to-night in difficult situations has assured to her my respect and esteem."

Lucy, whose spirits had been greatly agitated, was so overcome by this tribute of praise, that leaning her head on Catherine's shoulder she burst into tears.

Lord Shirley then related all the embarrassments of the evening, especially those consequent on his being left alone with Lucy; and when he ended, he desired the General to be as open as he had been. And having obtained his wish, he found Lucy still more endeared to him than before, as it was fear for his life that had occasioned her indisposition.

"I am the only person who has to undergo any self-blame in this evening's adventures," said Catherine; "and I am painfully self-condemned indeed."

"You!"

"Yes; had I not encouraged Mr. Melvyn to walk with us, Lord Shirley when he came would have joined me, and then my grandfather would have given his arm either to Lucy or his sister, and we should all three of us have been protected;—however, I have been sufficiently punished for my fault, for I never passed a more disagreeable evening."

"My dear, you are blaming yourself unjustly," said the General; and so said Lucy; but Lord Shirley was silent. At last he said, "Candour obliges me to own that I think you were, Miss Shirley, the original cause of this distress; but I was more to blame than you in giving way to temper, and pique; and in not choosing to notice the General's wish to give you up to my care, I was wanting in proper respect both to you and to myself; and I, too, have been pretty severely punished, but I hope never to be so churlish again."

"Ah!" cried Lucy, laughing, "*ne gagez pas.*" And the earl felt that a man in love, and jealous, could not answer for never being churlish again.

"There is one pleasant result, however, from the busy scene of this evening," said Catherine, "which I shall reflect upon with pleasure; and that is, the high character my friend Lucy has obtained,—a sufficient compensation to me for that degree of character which I have lost. I wish my aunt had heard your panegyric on her, Lord Shirley."

"She shall hear it, depend upon it; for I will find her where she lies asleep, and in her ear I'll holla—Lucy Merle!"

"That will not be quite decorous, I think," observed the General, laughing; "and I must certainly call you out if you do; and believe me, I am not much inclined to fight her battles any way."

"My poor aunt!" cried Catherine; "was ever any one so much her own enemy as she is! Yet she has a fine understanding, and can be agreeable."

"Ay, I thought you would say something in her praise, or not mention her at all," said Lucy; "but it would not become me to talk of her now, as she has been the means of such evil to me, or rather of such misery. Still, to have my conduct approved in any way, as it has

been, is a balm which I am apt to think a sufficient one for all I have endured, except the misery of expecting that a duel must take place."

The coach now stopped at the General's door, and the ladies retired to their apartments.

"O my dearest friend!" cried Lucy, whom Catherine accompanied to hers, "if you ever marry any one but Lord Shirley, I never can forgive you! Had you but seen him, and heard him to-night! had you witnessed his pretty behaviour during my conversation with my vulgar relations; and had you heard his kind encouraging words, and seen the respectful manner in which he presented me as your friend to an impertinent Colonel,—you would have been delighted with him. Then the happy union of coolness and spirit with which he defended me from that tipsy boy! O dear! that ever I should live to be so enamoured of a nobleman! I must return home before my principles are quite corrupted."

"Reformed, you mean," said Catherine smiling; "but it will be time enough for me to decide whether I shall have Lord Shirley or not, when he seems to wish to marry me; and I suspect it is because you believe he is not likely to have me, that you are desirous he should."

"Oh, no, no! all those improper feelings are gone, believe me; and since your relation of what happened on the birth-day, a bitter modification of the same feelings makes me wish you to marry, and soon; and I know no one worthy of you, but your noble cousin;—I am sure he loves you."

"Oh, no! it is by no means sure—but good night! you look frightfully pale, and I also want rest." Then kissing her more affectionately than usual, Catherine retired to her room; but it was long before her mind would allow her to sleep.

CHAPTER XIII.

The next morning, even sooner than the customs of the world warrant, Lord Livesay rode up to the gate; and, having sent in his name, was admitted to the General in his study; where, being joined by Lord Shirley, the young earl repeated his apologies for his conduct of the night before, and earnestly entreated to be allowed to tender them again to the young lady whom he had insulted.

Accordingly, Lord Shirley requested permission to introduce him into Catherine's sitting-room; and, almost with trembling footsteps, the young peer followed him thither. On entering, he advanced, blushing like a girl, and begged to have the honour of being again presented to Miss Shirley and her friend, that he might apologize with the deepest humility for his conduct of the night before. "But to you, Miss Merle," said he, "my particular excuses are due; and I only wonder you can suffer me in your presence."

Lord Livesay spoke this with such hesitation and confusion, that Lucy, though she had previously resolved to receive him with repelling coldness, could not keep her resolution, but kindly assured him of her entire forgiveness; while Catherine obligingly added, "And I hope this unpleasant business will have pleasant consequences; and that my grandfather, by having been thus introduced to the son of his old friend, will feel for him much of the regard which he felt for the father."

The young earl replied, "that the manner by which he was first known to the General, would not, he feared, make him anticipate his acquaintance with pleasure, except for his father's sake. But no matter," added he, "I loved my father so dearly, that I am willing to owe any good that may befal me, to recollection of him, rather than knowledge of me."

Is it possible, thought all the persons present, that this modest, elegant young man, can be the noisy, quarrelsome, impudent, fiery-eyed boy we saw last night? If wine can so change a man, how can a rational being persist to drink it to excess?—But they were called from contemplating the agreeable contrast visible between Lord Livesay in the morning, and the same person in the evening, by the entrance of a visiter not quite so welcome to Lord Shirley, as the servant announced Mr. Melvyn. Nor, were his feelings rendered more pleasant, when, on casting a side glance on Catherine, he saw her eye become downcast, and her cheek covered with blushes; and such indeed was her evident embarrassment, that a man less vain than Melvyn might have drawn flattering conclusions from it.

How often have I seen such emotion betrayed and commented upon, when the blushing being thus judged of was as free from any attachment for the man whose presence embarrassed her, as was the heart of Catherine free from any partiality towards Melvyn!

Various and contradictory are the feelings and the conduct of a jealous man!—Though Lord Shirley knew that if he went away he should leave Melvyn with Catherine, and should not know how she conducted herself towards him, whether familiarly or coldly, he endured so much pain in seeing them together, that he invited Lord Livesay to ride with him till dinner time, he having promised to dine and sleep at Hampton on the General's earnest invitation, and his servant having consequently been despatched to London for a change of clothes.

Catherine blushed deeply when she heard this proposal; and Lord Shirley feared it was from pleasure that she might be left to enjoy the conversation of the fascinating Melvyn,

unrestrained by his reproving eye; and he immediately regretted that Lord Livesay had so readily accepted his invitation. But it was too late to retract; therefore, taking the earl's arm, he led him away to the stables.

"This is very strange; I thought Shirley was going to walk with you, ladies," said the General.

"So he was," replied Catherine; "but I suppose that he concluded we should not walk, as Mr. Melvyn is here." And she said this with such embarrassment, and Melvyn saw in Lord Shirley's conduct such evidences of jealousy, that his heart bounded with exultation, though he politely expressed his regret that his visit should have been so ill-timed as to have interfered with any plans of Lord Shirley or the ladies; he had made, (he said,) a point of taking the earliest opportunity of bringing the General the flower-seeds he had promised him, and the sermon he had offered to lend Miss Shirley, and he should now take his leave.

"But as Lord Shirley is gone to ride, you will gratify the General," said Catherine, "by staying to see his fine flowers, and to convince yourself that these you bring will not appear in bad company." She then led the way to the hot-house, whither Lucy reluctantly followed.

"What can she mean," thought Lucy, "by being so civil to this man! It cannot be that she is, like other women, flattered by the consciousness that he admires her."

However, her regrets and ill-humour could not remove Melvyn from his station, nor recall the truant earl; and even Lucy herself was not long proof against his entertaining power and winning manners, though she was provoked with herself for yielding to the fascination.

As soon as Lord Shirley was gone a mile on his ride, he wished himself back again; and Lord Livesay, who when sober was painfully humble in his opinion of himself, was convinced that Lord Shirley fell into such profound reverie merely from his dullness as a companion, and became as silent as the earl.

But selfish abstraction could not long engross the generous mind of Lord Shirley, and he forced himself to talk; for which effort he was soon rewarded by hearing the young earl pronounce a most animated eulogium on Catherine's beauty and manners, but pronounced in such a manner as to convince Lord Shirley he had no wishes or intention of being his rival. Of Lucy he spoke more guardedly, and with less warmth. But he took care to ask if she was of the family of Merles in Worcestershire; and he looked disappointed when Lord Shirley informed him, (as he thought it right to do,) that Miss Merle was a young woman of neither family nor fortune, but highly respectable both from her talents and her virtues, and greatly beloved by Miss Shirley, who had lived some time with her and her mother.

"Miss Shirley's friendship for her is of itself a recommendation," said the young earl sighing. "Her love is reported to be given to you, though some say Mr. Melvyn will be the happy man; but I don't believe it, as in my eyes you have every possible advantage over him. But I should not have ventured to name this nonsense to you, had I not, even in the short time I saw you together, observed that you and your fair cousin had no symptoms of love about you, and that the report was consequently false."

"There!" thought Lord Shirley, "even this boy sees there is nothing like love on her side; and I am glad I have self-command enough to conceal its existence on mine. However, my determination is taken, and tomorrow or the next day I set off on my travels; for I will not be the victim of a hopeless passion; and, as I have thought before, perhaps when I am gone she may miss me!"

At the idea that he was going away and should not see her again, perhaps for years, the earl's tenderness returned, and with it the wish of seeing her again directly. Then declaring, which was very true, that he had been extremely rude in leaving the ladies, as he had promised to walk with them, he proposed returning before it was too late to get a walk before dinner;—"And I hope," added he involuntarily, "Melvyn will be gone before we return."

"Then he has not, I see, your consent to marry your fair cousin?"

"No—by no means."

"But surely the reception she gave him was flattering?"

"Did you think so?" answered the earl, starting and turning pale at this confirmation of his own opinion.

Lord Livesay, observing his manner, looked earnestly at him, and could not help seeing that, though Catherine might be indifferent to Lord Shirley, he was not to her. He therefore tried to soften the pain of the wound he had unintentionally inflicted, by saying, "But I don't know Miss Shirley well enough to judge of her sentiments by her manner, and women are often most attentive to those whom they least like in their hearts."

"True," said Lord Shirley, "and men, too, sometimes." They now, by mutual consent, clapped spurs to their horses, and soon returned to the General. But Melvyn was still there, and listening with delight to Catherine's singing and playing; and even Lucy had been prevailed upon to join her friend in amusing Mr. Melvyn, and in singing a trio with him and her friend; for Melvyn, amongst his other talents, possessed that of singing.

Lucy had heard of fascination, and she believed Melvyn had the art. But some persons have the power of carrying whatever point

they set their mind upon, and charming away prejudices the best founded.—It was with the greatest difficulty the General could prevail on himself not to ask Melvyn to dinner; and he did resolve to invite him some day when he was sure Lord Shirley would not be there.

Lord Livesay, who now thoroughly comprehended the state of Lord Shirley's heart, and saw his lip quiver when he beheld through the window the happiness of Melvyn, took upon himself to speak when they entered the apartment at the close of the duet, and assured the ladies they had shortened their ride, and were returned purposely to make amends for their rudeness in going away, and also to offer their attendance on them in the walk projected in the morning.

"I am so glad to hear it!" said Lucy, rising; "I have been wishing for a walk all day."

"And I remember that I have been the obstacle to your being indulged," said Melvyn, smiling and rising; "but I will be so no longer."

"You have been so agreeable, sir," said Lucy, blushing, "that I forgot very soon my wishes and my regrets; but now, if you do not mean to go with us, I must own it would be kind in you to go away."

"But perhaps Mr. Melvyn will accompany you?" said the General.

"Perhaps he will," said Catherine, faintly; while both the earls looked at her with a scrutinizing look, which made her appear still more confused.

Melvyn, however, was firm in his refusal to stay any longer; and he was quite satisfied with the morning's mischief and success; for he had evidently made Lord Shirley jealous, and he flattered himself that Catherine felt for him an incipient but decided preference.

As soon as he was gone, Catherine's ease and cheerfulness returned, but not Lord Shirley's; for he could attribute her former restraint of manner and her present ease to the sort of timid, doubting solicitude, which a woman, ay, and a man, too, feels in the presence of a beloved object, before the certainty of being beloved converts what before was anxious suspense into a sensation of exquisite enjoyment.

Lord Livesay, who, though very young, had that degree of feeling, himself, which gives a quick insight into the feelings of others, was already enough interested in Lord Shirley's welfare to see his disquietude with great pity, especially as he could not help thinking he had cause for alarm. Still, was increased cheerfulness in the absence of a particular person a proof of love for that person? Yes, if that absence had been preceded by circumstances which proved the attachment of the departed guest; cheerfulness being the indication of a light and lightened heart; and perhaps, thought Lord Livesay, the visit this morning has convinced Miss Shirley of Melvyn's love.

The ladies now returned to the gentlemen once more equipped for their expedition.—While Lord Livesay was debating within himself to which of the ladies it would be most expedient for him to offer his arm, he believed it would be right to give it to Miss Shirley rather than Lucy, because he felt towards the latter a degree of liking which honour forbade him even to wish to indulge in one way, and pride and prudence equally prohibited him from indulging in another. But Lord Shirley decided the matter at once, for he took Lucy on one side, to ask her what brought Melvyn to Hampton, and as he did so, he drew her arm under his.

Catherine felt rather hurt at her noble cousin's unusual desertion, and attributed it to his continued disapprobation of her civility to Melvyn, but she accepted the young earl's arm with a smile, and they proceeded on their projected tour of the common.

Lord Livesay was soon induced by the benevolent sweetness of Catherine's manner, and the polite attention with which she listened to him, to talk on a variety of subjects, but the favourite one was the merits of his lost father, and with a conversation of this nature Catherine's own feelings led her to sympathize so sincerely, that the walk to her was so full of pensive and tender recollections, that even Lord Shirley's coldness was forgotten.

But not such were the sensations of Lord Shirley during his walk; for Lucy, even Lucy who had cheered his hopes by her dislike of Melvyn, was obliged to own that his powers of captivation had driven away the remembrance of her prejudices against him, and that till they began to sing and play, time had insensibly passed, and even Lord Shirley's absence had no longer been felt.

"Well," said Lord Shirley with a deep sigh, "when I am gone away not to return for years, you will possibly both of you miss and regret me."

"What! you going away for years! I can't believe it, I can't endure it, I can't suffer it," cried Lucy. "What can you mean, Lord Shirley? But I am sure you only say so to torment me."

"Indeed I don't; but I conjure you not to say one word of my intention to your friend or the General; when my mind is made up, they shall know it; till then, if you have any regard for me, you will be silent." Lucy promised she would as a proof of her regard, but assured him that she knew not how to keep such a load on her mind unshared.

They returned at length to the house only just in time to dress for dinner, and not one of the party when they met, the General excepted, sat down to table without some painful consciousness or other pressing on their spirits. Lord Livesay had a great mind to fall in love

with Lucy Merle, but dared not;—Catherine was uneasy, because she saw she had vexed Lord Shirley and incurred his disapprobation; Lord Shirley was a prey to many of the disquieting feelings attendant on love, and Lucy was tormented by the idea of his near departure. But the General from inclination, and Catherine from principle, exerted themselves for the entertainment of their guests. And when she and Lucy retired, it was already evident that the well-bred, modest, sensible Lord Livesay of the morning, was in a fair way of becoming the flushed, riotous, and disagreeable Lord Livesay of the evening.

"That creature will be horribly tipsy again," said Lucy.

"Poor young man!" observed Catherine, "how shocking it is to think that the indulgence of a vice should thus convert a man into a beast—an agreeable companion into a disgusting driveller! What can make him swallow wine thus? Perhaps he is unhappy, and does it to drown care."

"Spoken with your usual candour," said Lucy. "But how should a boy like Lord Livesay have contrived to become acquainted with care? She usually selects her acquaintance from the elderly, not the young. What cares then can this young thing have, unless he is in love?"

"My dear Lucy, how can you talk thus thoughtlessly and forgetfully? You and I are younger than Lord Livesay, yet we have known care and sorrow, too, have we not?"

Lucy mournfully replied in the affirmative, and as if thought was her foe on that subject, proposed reading aloud till the gentlemen came.

As soon as they joined them, Lord Livesay was (what they expected to see him) converted by wine into a new character; and the modest, quiet young man, converted into a red-eyed, staring, daring man of the town. Lord Shirley and the General both looked shocked to see him so degraded, and the latter had certainly done as much as was consistent with hospitality to prevent it. But poor Lord Livesay had been too long habituated to this dangerous excitement to be easy without it, and his temperate companions, to whom wine in the slightest excess was disgusting, could not help suspecting like Catherine, that he had originally given way to drinking, in order to fly, thereby, from himself.

"Perhaps," thought Lord Shirley, "he has been extravagant, and is pursued by creditors whom he cannot pay. If that be the case, how gladly should I assist him to the utmost of my power to set his mind at ease, and by that means deprive him of the necessity of this daily stimulus!" And at the same moment the same generous thought was passing in the mind of the General.

The greatest and most unpleasant change made in Lord Livesay by the wine that he had drunk, was visible in his manner to Lucy.—The high-principled reserve with which he had before treated her, at once indicative of honour and delicacy, had now given way to a persevering and troublesome attention, which showed itself in following her round the room, though he was still sufficiently restrained by consciousness of where he was, not to address her in the language of a lover.

But he soon grew so much worse by breathing the air in an open verandah, that the General resolved he should not return home that night on horseback. He therefore ordered a bed to be prepared for him, and some time before the usual hour for retiring had arrived, Lord Livesay owned himself very ready to occupy it.

The kind-hearted and respectable persons whom he left together did not amuse themselves, as is too commonly the case, with censuring or ridiculing the infirmity of the departed guest, but generously deplored, and as generously resolved, if possible, to cure it; while the General thought himself authorized by his friendship with the father, to admonish, and if possible, reform the errors of the son. It was evident that he had the habit of being intoxicated, or he must have abstained from excess that evening, as he was in the company of those who had suffered so much from his intemperance the night before. "He has certainly something on his mind," said Catherine; and her companions, though not as habitually candid as herself, because not as habitually under the influence of a religious spirit, agreed with her entirely; and, as I before observed, both the gentlemen secretly resolved to gain his confidence if possible. There is certainly something in a benevolent resolve that possesses a sure, and almost an exclusive power of cheering the mind that is brooding over its own sorrows, and of banishing for the time being the influence of every selfish calamity.

No sooner did Lord Shirley conceive the welcome hope of relieving a burdened mind, and saving a fellow-creature from destruction, than his eye resumed its lustre, and his step its elasticity; while even Melvyn, the formidable Melvyn, was forgotten.

"Would it were possible to save this poor young man!" cried Catherine.

"Would it were! But perhaps it is," said Lord Shirley; "and at any rate it is worth the trial."

"Ay—but should his disorder be love," said Lucy, "what is to be done then?"

"Why, if it be," replied the General archly, "I suspect you are the person we must look to for his cure, as you have either banished for a time the remembrance of his first love, or you are likely to become his first love yourself."

"Me! O no! But if I effected the banishment you talk of, it was only by means of

wine, and as wine did; and when he is sober to-morrow he will forget me and my intoxicating qualities. And your latter representation of my power over him, present and to come, must be false; for there never was even the faintest feeling of true love, I am convinced, without respect, and respect so profound and so habitual, that it would not be in the power even of drunkenness to overcome it; and I think you will allow the earl's conduct to me, though better than it was last night, was not what it ought to be."

"Certainly not, my dear; and I assure you, that, unless this boy promises to be more temperate when he dines with me, I shall not invite him again while you stay. But, Lucy, you have very high notions indeed of love, if you fancy it capable of conquering the power of wine; but I suppose you consider the influence both of wine and of love as intoxicating, and you think their strength pretty equally balanced."

"Yes—where the love is as pure and as good as the wine. But is it not supposed that a glass of brandy taken after excess of wine restores its tone to the digestion, and sobers the person that takes it?"

"I believe it is so imagined by some."

"Well, then, I think that the sight and influence of that object who is truly beloved, will operate on the lover's mind as brandy would on his stomach. And now I trust I have made my case clear."

"Perfectly so—and if it be not true, it is at least ingenious. But I observe, Lucy, that you and I have been the only speakers in this conversation; Lionel and Catherine have said nothing."

"Oh! they think the more, depend on it; and I should like to hear the result of their deliberations."

"For my part," said Catherine, smiling, "I never talk on a subject I do not understand, and one on which I am entirely ignorant, therefore I never talk of what are, or what are not, the signs of love."

"And I," observed Lord Shirley, gravely, "think love, like religion, too sacred to be made the theme even of witty speculations. But pray, Miss Merle, whence did you derive your delicate notions of the passion? notions so truly becoming the delicacy of your sex, that I honour you for them; and I feel that a woman who is refined enough to think that respect in a lover is the surest proof of love, is secured from any less reputable evidence of the existence of the passion. But why do you laugh?"

"Perhaps from great conceit on my part."

"But we all know you are honest enough to tell us, notwithstanding, what it is."

"Still I am almost ashamed; but I will own that I was laughing to think, how our mutual good qualities have annihilated our prejudices against each other;—you have forgotten my democratic principles in what you think my better feelings and motives of action, and I have forgotten in your merits and your kindness my dislike of lords and coronets."

"True," said the General; "and sincerely do I wish that such liberality were more common; for by that means party distinctions and political feuds would be done away, or at least the sharp edges of such animosities would be rubbed off, and the great commandment—that we should love one another—would no longer be like an old penal statute, known to exist, but never acted upon."

"Never acted upon!" cried Catherine. "Alas! if so, what a world am I going to become acquainted with!"

"But you, my blessed child," cried the General tenderly, "have acquainted yourself already so well with a better world, that you are armed, I trust, against all its evils and its dangers. But it grows late. Good night, my dear girls!"

"Good night," replied Catherine; "and good night, my dear lord," she added, in a tone that completely dispelled all Lord Shirley's uneasy feelings, and vibrated on his ear long after Catherine had lost her consciousness in sleep.

CHAPTER XIV.

The next morning Lord Shirley, who could never rest when he had a kind action to perform, rose very soon; and when informed that Lord Livesay was awake, he asked leave to be admitted to his bedside; and he was so.

"What! up already, Shirley?" said the young earl; "but, I recollect, you never drink too much wine, therefore you do not want much sleep; but by the by I am afraid I was very tipsy last night, and behaved very ill."

"You were so, and you did not behave quite properly—In short, Lord Livesay sober, and the same gentleman intoxicated, are two distinct characters. The former is a modest, sensible, well-bred, good-looking young man—what the other is I will not say."

"Yes, you may, I can bear it; for I know I deserve to be roughly handled."

"But what right have I to handle you roughly? No, I have better views respecting you. It appears to me so strange that a youth of your high rank, good feelings, and good sense, should every day make a point of depriving himself of his senses, and the consciousness of possessing so many desirable things, that I believe there must be some strong operating cause for such a dereliction of all that is right; and it is my earnest wish to know what this cause is, that I may try if

it be in my power to remove the cause, in order to annihilate the effect."

Lord Livesay sighed deeply, and hid his face in the pillow; then looking up rather haughtily, he said, "I beg, my lord, you will leave me and my secrets to myself.—This may be well meant, but it is devilishly officious in an acquaintance of yesterday."

"But I thought we were friends, Livesay—you told me so yesterday morning."

"No—I told you so last night, probably, as I am very loving when I am drunk."

"And so you are when sober; a generous-hearted, kind, feeling being, and too conscious that you are capable of a friendly action yourself, to scruple much allowing a friend to do one by you."

"And why the devil should you think I want to have such actions done by me? Why not suppose I drink wine merely from love of it, and because I am a *sot?*"

"Because there is nothing sottish about you; and you throw down your wine like a man that wants to get a certain quantity down in order to drown care, and not like one who drinks it because he likes the taste of it,—that is, slowly and sippingly."

"You are plaguily observant. But come now, admitting that I do drink to banish care, how do you know that my cares do not proceed from love; and how could you help me then?"

"But I am sure they do not proceed from love."

"How can you possibly tell that?"

"Because the restrained but conscious manner in which you talked of Miss Merle in the morning, and your behaviour towards her at night, betokened too strong a feeling towards her to be consistent with a real passion towards another woman."

"Shirley, you deal with the devil! I am sure you do, and I will have no more to say to you. Go, go, pray leave me!"

"Certainly, if you desire it; for I have no right to force myself upon your confidence. Still it would delight me to serve you—it would delight, nay it would benefit my own mind to be allowed to assist in unburthening yours."

"But who told you my mind was burthened?"

"My own observations, and my own wishes; for I could not bear to think that you drank to such a disgusting excess for the mere sake of the liquor."

"No, I am not quite such a beast as that, thank Heaven!"

"There, now you have confirmed my suspicions."

"Yes, but I have told you nothing."

"No, but I know you will tell me all."

"Do you know that you are a very impudent fellow, Shirley! If you talk thus artfully and insinuatingly to women, I wonder they can ever withstand you."

"But I never do, except when I wish to do them good; and as I wish to do you good, I talk to you in the manner you are pleased to call insinuating."

"Do me good! No, it is impossible."

"Well, let me try."

"I will think of it; but leave me now." And Lord Shirley obeyed.

In an hour after, Lord Shirley, who was walking in the garden, was joined there by the young earl, who in great emotion declared that he had made up his mind to confide in him.

"I trust you will never have cause to repent your confidence; and the sooner you give it to me the better," cried Lord Shirley soothingly; "therefore I am at your service here now, or I will attend you immediately to town."

"Here now, if you please, or I may repent," replied Lord Livesay; and the earl led him to his own apartment.

Lord Livesay had only to relate a too common tale. He was only eighteen when he lost his father, and became heir to a handsome entailed and unentailed property in land and money; but his extravagance had so far exceeded his income till of age, that he had taken up money from Jews and other people at such exorbitant interest, and in such profusion, that when he came of age he had been forced to sell some estates to enable him to pay the demand on him, which, though not bound in law to pay, he felt himself obliged to do in honour.

Lord Shirley on hearing this did not interrupt his new friend, in order to compliment him on his integrity; for he saw nothing to praise in it, as he felt that no man of honour could do otherwise. It may be uncandid, but I confess that the eulogy bestowed on a generous, a charitable, or an honest action, is always with me a test of the person's own qualities. If inclined to be generous, charitable, and honest, in spite of all temptation to be otherwise, they will, I conclude, be temperate in their praise of actions which they feel they should themselves perform; but if, on the contrary, they launch out into loud panegyric, and speak of the action and the actor as noble, wonderful, and soforth, then I suspect that the feelings and the power they thus eulogize are comparatively strangers to their hearts, and above their abilities.

Reader, forgive this digression. I will return to my narrative.—Lord Livesay went on to say that, having thus diminished his income without the power of diminishing his expenditure, he had continued to contract debt on debt, in which folly he had been assisted by an extravagant mistress, who had refused to leave him; and who therefore made his home, his reflections, and his prospects so wretched, that he had learnt to drink to drive away care, and

'hat he expected to be forced to sell all the estates that were not entailed, and yet be obliged to incur exile, or imprisonment.

When he had ended the mortifying and melancholy detail, Lord Shirley said, "I never before felt so grateful for the happier circumstances in which I was placed during a very long minority, as I was preserved by the care of watchful guardians from the dangers to which you have been exposed, and to which I also might have yielded, and am consequently enabled to rescue from his embarrassments a very amiable young man."

The delicacy of Lord Shirley was not lost upon his new friend, who, seizing his hand, burst into a passionate flood of tears.

Lord Shirley continued thus: "The accumulations of my minority were in themselves a fortune, and they have continued to accumulate, being appropriated to any urgent and particular demands for myself or others;—and how can I employ them better, than in preserving you from a jail, and, what is worse, from a degrading vice, and its pernicious consequences? I flatter myself, that when I know the amount of your debts, I can discharge them, making myself the sole creditor, and the estates that remain to you shall be the security for my repayment."

"You my sole creditor! No, that would be too great happiness! but it is impossible!"

"I hope it is not at all impossible; but that I shall see, if you will empower me to talk with your lawyer;—and the next thing to be done is to talk with your mistress."

"What, would you undertake that for me, too? Oh, my dear fellow! that would indeed be a kindness."

"To be sure I will, especially after the pretty compliments which you have paid me on my insinuating powers; for I declare you have made me impatient to employ them, and you will confer an obligation on me by putting it in my power to exert them directly."

Again was Lord Livesay completely subdued by the generosity of his new friend. But they were summoned to breakfast, and he was forced to struggle with his feelings.

As soon as breakfast was over, which was distinguished, on the young earl's side, by the most marked and respectful attention to Lucy, the General begged leave to speak with Lord Livesay in his study.—He there went over much the same ground as Lord Shirley, and ended by the same liberal offers of service, if he could in any way serve him.

Lord Livesay listened with a heart almost bursting with gratitude. "Into what family of angels has my good fortune thrown me!" he exclaimed. And when he was able to speak, he told the General that "his kindness was rendered needless by the liberal offer of his noble nephew."

It was now settled that the two earls should go directly to London, and put every thing in train immediately; Lord Livesay being desired to consider either New Street or Hampton as his home, till his own affairs were settled and his lady disposed of.

"My lord," said Lord Shirley, as they rode to London, "you know not what good you have done me, by allowing me to serve you;—believe me, the obligation is all on my side. I have known such a course of uninterrupted prosperity, that I have lived in terror of having that hardness of heart which belongs so often to the prosperous; but you have enabled me to convince myself that prosperity has not rendered me callous to the sufferings of others, and I am cheered by the consciousness."

"I cannot reward you for your goodness," replied Lord Livesay; "but I trust there is one who can.—But what will your future wife say, whoever she may be, to your advancing so much money for an extravagant profligate like myself?"

"Livesay, I could never love or marry a mean or selfish woman. My future wife must be a woman capable of being a rigid economist from necessity and duty, but open-hearted and open-handed from inclination; and to no other woman than the one I have described can my heart ever be prevailed on to do homage."

Lord Livesay knew that noble heart was already devoted; but he was too delicate to hint at his knowledge; most fervently, however, did he pray that the attachment of Lord Shirley might prove as fortunate and successful as it was well founded and deeply felt.

Lord Livesay had desired the General to inform Catherine of Lord Shirley's generous conduct; and he took the earliest opportunity to assure her that the earl's liberality had left him nothing to do. But though Catherine was pleased to hear that her noble relation had acted thus, the General thought that she did not betray that strong emotion which a woman who loved a man would have felt on such an occasion; and he feared his hopes of a union between the earl and his heiress, the two persons whom he loved the best on earth, were as far off as ever.

But however gratified Catherine might be by Lord Shirley's undertaking to settle the affairs of the young earl, she was by no means delighted at the unavoidable absence from Hampton which these affairs induced, in spite of the occasional calls of Melvyn, and his meetings with her and Lucy by accident in their walks; and Catherine felt it an increase of her uncomfortableness, that whenever Lord Shirley did contrive to steal down to Hampton, he always met Melvyn at the house, coming away from it, or on the common. These rencontres had always a visible effect on the temper of the earl, and therefore they took away from the pleasure which his visits would otherwise have imparted.

At length Lord Livesay's debts were paid;

his mistress was prevailed upon to leave him, in consideration of a certain sum of money; and the young earl was nearly wild with joy and gratitude at being freed from two such burthens at once; and in the meanwhile he had never once been intoxicated; but Lord Shirley had the satisfaction of seeing that his habit of drinking had its origin entirely in uneasiness of mind, and that with the cause, there was no doubt but the effect would cease for ever.

CHAPTER XV.

Lord Shirley was now at liberty to put his own plans in execution, and leave England on his long-projected tour to the British Isles, whence he had some thoughts of joining our armies as a volunteer, as soon as he had resigned his militia command; and the frequency of Melvyn's visits to Hampton, whither it was impossible he should come so often if he was not sure of being welcomed with cordiality, confirmed his convictions of Catherine's indifference to him, and preference of Melvyn. "My departure then is certain," said he to himself, "and if she marries Melvyn, I know not when I shall have the courage to return!"

The General and Lucy, as well as Catherine, observed, on the day when these thoughts were passing in Lord Shirley's mind, that he was unusually gloomy; and while, as usual, the friends sung together that evening, and Catherine accompanied herself on the lute, in the little song to a Scotch tune of "Here's a health to those far away," Lord Shirley was so strongly affected, that he evidently turned aside to conceal a starting tear, and before the usual hour for retiring, he pleaded a bad headache as an excuse for leaving them early.

This singular conduct, and this unusual indisposition, awakened the fears of those whom he left for the health of Lord Shirley; as they were certain he would not have gone to bed so soon, had he not felt very unwell. "Still, his complaint seems to be more of the mind than the body," said the General; "and perhaps we shall know to-morrow what ails him."

The next morning Lord Shirley seemed as usual, except that he evidently tried to appear extremely gay. After breakfast he asked if any of them had commands to Scotland, for he was going to set off the next morning.

"To Scotland!" cried the General. "And pray, Lionel, how long shall you be gone?"

"Oh! I cannot tell! but not less than two or three years."

"Years!" faintly articulated Catherine.

"Yes, I mean to go the tour of the British Isles; and then perhaps I shall join our armies somewhere as a volunteer."

"What!" cried Catherine, rising, "are you going to tread in the steps of my father? perhaps to perish like him!" Then, bursting into tears, she suddenly left the room, and Lucy followed her.

"Shirley, you must not go," said the General, "you see you must not go, and that there is no reason for your going—Have those tears their origin in indifference?"

"My dear General, those tears flowed only at the remembrance of her father, and her parting with him to go the same tour, and share in equal, though not similar dangers. Could I but flatter myself I was mistaken, and that I had a chance of being beloved!"

"I believe you are a blind and obstinate puppy," said the General, "but I will go and see after this obdurate young person."

He found Catherine much agitated, and the more so because she was alarmed at and ashamed of her own agitation. "So, Shirley is bent on leaving us, my dear!" said he.

"Yes, it is my poor father over again," cried Catherine; "and it reminded me so forcibly of past scenes, that I could not bear it;—and just so after breakfast one day, did he declare his designs to me."

"I don't wonder then you were so affected," replied the General; while looking at Lucy he saw an arch and meaning smile playing about her lips.

Catherine had gone no further than the next room, and there she had requested Lucy to leave her to recover herself alone, but in vain. However, when the General said, as he left her, that he thought she would recover sooner by herself, Lucy took the hint and followed him.

"My dear," said the General to Lucy, "you and I have more sense and discernment a great deal than these young people; there is that silly girl fancying she is crying for her father, when she is weeping because Lionel is going away; and there is Lionel fool enough to believe her. But you, I see, are as wise as I am."

"I hope we are as wise as we think ourselves," replied Lucy; "and I wish we could communicate our wisdom to others."

"Well, well! I hope we are so,—there's a good girl, leave me alone with Lionel."

The General now returned to the earl, and found him pacing the room as if in great mental anxiety.

"How—how is Miss Shirley?"

"Why, weeping and wailing, and all for my poor son."

"You think it is all for him?"

"No, she thinks so herself; but, zounds, Lord Shirley, I cannot bear this policy any longer; try your fate at once like a man; if she is worth having, she is worth wooing; and if your pride is such that you cannot

bear to risk a refusal, then leave Catherine to be obtained by Melvyn, a man who has more love than pride."

"General," cried Lord Shirley, "I am not now withheld by any such unworthy motive; and if you will promise me not to be angry if Miss Shirley refuses me, or to influence her to accept me, I will try my fate instantly."

"I chide or influence Catherine!—I! Chide her I cannot do, I love her too well; and influence her I would not, if I could; because I am sure whatever her decision is, that decision is formed on good grounds. Well, and so you will venture, will you?"

"Yes; have the goodness to ask an interview of her in my name."

"I will."

The General then returned to Catherine, who was only just beginning to recover her composure, after a serious examination of her own feelings, and a great deal of self-reproach for having allowed herself, from the representations of Lucy, to fancy that Lord Shirley loved her, and for having allowed herself, in consequence of that idea, to feel more interest in him, and more pleasure in his society, than she thought consistent with female delicacy. Still she was not prepared, in spite of this serious communion with her own thoughts, for the General's artful communication.

"My dear," said he, "this Lionel is a comical fellow, and I verily believe he will never return to us again, unless the woman he loves sends for him to come and marry her."

"How, sir," cried Catherine, turning pale, "is Lord Shirley in love, and likely to be married? 'Tis strange, surely, very strange, we—that is—I should not know it; I think it unkind." And sinking on a chair, she trembled with uncontrollable emotion.

"Why, no, my dear, I did not tell you absolutely that he was going to be married; but for all that, I think his wedding-day not far distant; but he will tell you more himself."

"No, sir," cried Catherine rising; "I do not like such tardy confidence."

"Nor I; and I always told him he should have been more open earlier; but young men are so obstinate! However, he must see you, and he demands a private audience."

Lord Shirley meanwhile could no longer endure the state of suspense that he was in, but came, unsent for, into the room. Catherine sat down, rose, sat down again, in a most pitiable state of feelings; but seeing the General leave her alone with Lord Shirley, retiring as he did so with a low bow to each, and a very arch smile on his mouth, she began to suspect the truth, and was a little prepared for the declaration that followed.

But why detail a love scene? the most foolish often, but at the same time the most happy of scenes! Suffice it, that Catherine owned a well-founded regard for her noble relation, and gave a ready consent to become his wife as soon as circumstances admitted. Still Lord Shirley thought her manner cold, and that it did not bespeak affection at all equal to his own.

"Unreasonable being!" replied Catherine smiling; "believe me, when it is my duty to show you the extent of my love, you will have no reason to doubt it."

"Duty! must I owe it only to your sense of duty?"

"Oh! dear Lord Shirley," replied Catherine, "be not so mistaken as to wish any power more potent over your wife than a sense of duty."

Lord Shirley tried to be satisfied, and led her in triumph to the anxious grandfather and anxious friends; when the General declared every wish of his heart would now be accomplished, and he should go to his grave in peace.

Catherine that day, during a long and undisturbed tête-à-tête, convinced Lord Shirley, that though it was very probable, if she had never known him, she might have been charmed by the graces of Melvyn's manners and the captivating power of his conversation; yet long before she saw him first at court, she had admired her cousin Lord Shirley with an exclusive admiration, which, though not love, would have prevented her from feeling that passion for any other man.

It is easy to believe what we wish; and Lord Shirley was happy for the first time during many months. Still he would have been better pleased if Catherine had not bestowed such warm, nay, he thought, such extravagant praise on the graces and charms of Melvyn.

"However, I need not ask him to my house," thought the earl.

CHAPTER XVI.

Nor were the pert pleasantries in which, in the fulness of her heart, the delighted Lucy indulged herself on this occasion, at all likely to banish from Lord Shirley's mind the uncomfortable feelings with respect to Melvyn which had so long held possession of it.

"After all, my lord," said Lucy that day after dinner, "some of your success is, I believe, owing to my high veneration for you; for even Miss Shirley felt convinced that the nobleman's merit must indeed be great, who had power to make a wild theoretical girl, like myself, his devoted admirer. Besides, I always contrived to keep you before her mind's eye, in order to drive away impertinent and improper intruders."

"Improper intruders!"

"Yes; Mr. Melvyn for instance. If Miss Shirley talked of him, I talked of you. If she praised his elegance, I praised your handsomeness. If she admired his wit, I admired your fine sense."

"Then she did talk of Melvyn, and did praise him?"

"O yes, my lord; and I was once very much afraid that you might remain silent too long."

"What impossible slanders are these you are uttering of Miss Shirley?" said the General rather angrily, seeing Lord Shirley turn very pale. "If Catherine really spoke of Melvyn oftener than of Lionel, and praised him more, it was a sign she loved him less; and as to her having ever thought of him as a husband, that I am sure could never be.—But why do you not defend yourself, child?"

"Because I did not think it necessary. I could not suppose you would not see that Lucy's high spirits were venting themselves in jokes, which, as she meant nothing by them, she fancied would be considered as harmless by others."

"Why, that is true, my dear; and I dare say you are right, as you always are." But Lord Shirley said nothing; for jokes on this subject to him were like vitriol applied to a yet green wound; and he would have given half his possessions to have been sure, that though Catherine esteemed, respected, and admired him most, and felt him the most proper husband for her in every point of view, her heart and her fancy did not prefer Melvyn. Jokes are like sky-rockets, which, though they are meant only to amuse, yet are often, according to the place or object on which they light, the cause of mischief and of pain, if not of destruction.

The General saw and understood the earl's feelings, and resolved that the ill-omened presence of Melvyn at Hampton, as it now seemed to him, should not again overcloud the now lightened brow of Lord Shirley. He therefore went out, and gave secret orders to the servants, to say, if Mr. Melvyn called, that they were not at home. Lord Shirley and Catherine had both requested that their engagement should not be made known to the family for two or three days at least, that they might avoid as long as possible the trouble and annoyance of letters and visits of congratulation. The secret, therefore, was imparted only to Lord Livesay when he came the next morning to breakfast. He heard it with the most unaffected joy, and declared that this, and almost this alone, had been wanting to his entire felicity. He heaved a deep sigh as he uttered this "almost," and soon after begged to see the earl alone.

"My dear lord," said he, "you know you advised me to marry, in order to prevent my having the weakness to form another connexion as disgraceful and immoral as my last; and I am inclined to take your advice."

"I am glad to hear it—and the sooner the better."

"Yes—but perhaps the woman I could love may not like me, and may not suit me; for, to be honest, it is my wish to pay my addresses to Miss Merle."

Lord Shirley started at hearing this, and walked rapidly across the room, his whole face crimsoned with strong emotion! Then Lucy, the humble friend of his future bride, might be, and perhaps would be, a countess! and the intimacy which his pride often disapproved, would be sanctioned by equality of rank! It was a tempting and a pleasant prospect; and a word from him would make the young earl persevere in his design, and Lucy's prejudices and indifference would perhaps vanish before the splendour offered to her acceptance. But the triumph of self-interest over honour and integrity could never be more than transient in the bosom of Lord Shirley; and, regardless of his own gratification, he resolved to consider nothing but Lord Livesay's good.

"My dear Lord," said he, "you are not in love with Miss Merle yet, though I see very clearly that you soon would be; therefore, it is my earnest advice to you that you see as little of her as possible, and travel, or look out for some more proper object of pursuit, directly."

"Proper!"

"Yes—remember I said proper, not deserving; for a more deserving creature than Lucy Merle exists not, in one sense of the word; and for my own and Catherine's sake, to see her elevated to the rank of a peeress, is so pleasant a prospect, that it requires all my sense of duty to you to enable me to resist it. But imperious integrity bids me say that such an unequal match as this, would in all probability turn out ill; for she has a vulgar vixenish mother, and still more vulgar relations."

"But I do not marry them, and need not be troubled with them."

"Ay! but Lucy Merle is a being strongly attached to her duties; and could you wish your wife to violate her duty? If she is inclined to fail, or you make her fail, in the first duty she was taught to perform, that of loving and honouring a parent, and respecting the ties of kindred, where is your security that she will not learn to fail in her duty to her husband? And would she not be lowered in your esteem, if she were ready to give up, however vulgar and unsuitable they might be, the playmates of infancy, and the being that bore her in her bosom? She would be like a tree in Holland, whose stem is painted, and exhibits a bright and gaudy colour to the eye, while its natural, humbler-coloured, but more becoming bark is destroyed, and its healthy juices are unwholesomely forbidden to exude."

"But if she loved me, I should be all to her, and she would not feel the loss of other ties."

"But are we not enjoined to honour our father and our mother? and cutting their acquaintance seems to me a singular way of fulfilling the commandment. And there is another obstacle to your union with Miss Merle, which will perhaps weigh more with you than all my arguments—namely, that I believe she would decidedly reject your suit; for she has imbibed certain notions of republicanism and so forth, which in her are not mere declamation, but which would, I am convinced, influence her actions. She is raving about America and clearing lands; and her first ambition is to marry some American settler, and enjoy the delight of living under a republican form of government."

"But perhaps the temptation of a present visible coronet and noble husband, would be more to her than an unseen and distant republican one; and then, when once married and a countess, she would naturally give up opinions that had a tendency to overset and annihilate the rank to which she was elevated."

"Very likely the old proverb of 'The grapes are sour' may apply here; and the republican hater of titles, when titled, might cease in her heart to be a republican.

"But Lucy has talents and spirit, and some pleasure in displaying both; therefore from the pride of showing that rank had not changed her opinions, and that such was her disinterested virtue, she still disliked that rank which she was enjoying, it is very likely that your lordship might have the satisfaction of hearing your countess at your own table pronouncing an eloquent panegyric on the natural equality of man; and leading you a weary life if you would not invite to your house all the leaders of the party denominated the low party in this country. How would you like to hear your wife exclaim 'A lord, when to a man compared, is but a man!' and indulge in these stale quotations, *alias* truisms, in return for the honour to which you had raised her? However, all these fears may be visionary, and the strong mind of Lucy might teach her more conformity to the decorum of her situation; but the objections founded on the vulgarity of her connexions, and the absolute necessity you would be under of making them occasionally your associates, or cut the ties of blood asunder, checking if not destroying in your wife those natural and sweet affections which make the charm of woman, these are real and unremovable; and if you hesitate any longer, I will take you to call on Mrs. Merle directly, and see if I cannot also present you to cousin Dorothy and cousin Bridget."

"I see you are right," said Lord Livesay with a deep sigh; "but she is monstrously handsome! ay, and attractive too."

"She is so, and so are many women in your own rank of life; and you must own you are not sufficiently in love to make her absolutely necessary to your happiness, without which necessity, and conviction, neither man nor woman ought to marry."

"No—but I soon should be; and with a little encouragement, I could be up to the chin in love."

"Then fly, while you are only ankle-deep, and I am sure you will live to thank me for my wholesome and disinterested advice."

"Well, well, I will. But surely you will let me stay dinner?"

"By no means;—the indulgence can do no good, and may do harm."

"Well then, I will go; you have acquired a right to govern even my feelings."

"Pshaw! I disown all such right; if I influence you, let it be by your affection for me."

"Shirley!" cried Lord Livesay squeezing his hand affectionately, "it is my first wish to live to show my gratitude to you by some means in my power, and then I do think I should die contented."

"You know I hate this sort of conversation, but if your gratitude be such a troublesome weight to you, you may relieve yourself a little by granting me one request, namely, leave to tell Lucy this conversation; for I shall not be easy in mind till I have imparted it to her."

"But she will despise me for having allowed myself to be talked out of my love."

"No—she is not a common-minded woman, and she will respect you for having been able to listen to reason;—do, therefore, let me communicate to her such parts of the conversation as I can relate with propriety; for, if I did not do thus, I should feel as if I had acted an underhand and a treacherous part."

"Well, well, do as you please," replied the young earl. And they returned to the ladies, to whom Lord Livesay expressed his sorrow for being obliged to go to town directly. Then affectionately shaking Catherine's hand, and raising his eyes tenderly and mournfully to Lucy's face, as if conscious he was gazing on her for the last time, he said faintly, "God bless you, my dear Miss Merle!" and ran out of the house. Lord Shirley followed him to the stables, where, to shorten his trial, he had chosen to mount, and was convinced how wise he had been in advising his instant departure, by seeing the agitation which the poor youth felt at having gazed his last on the woman whom prudence forbade him to marry.

"I wonder what ailed the little peer!" said Lucy; "his farewell to me was almost tender."

"Quite tender, I think," replied Catherine, smiling; "and who knows what your bright eyes may have done? Who knows but he may come and lay his coronet at your feet?"

"I wish he might!" cried Lucy with great fervour.

"Indeed!"

"Yes; that I might show the triumph of principle over vanity, and prove my contempt of titles not a mere declamation, but the well-founded sentiment of my head and heart."

"That you might show, I think, on the contrary," replied Catherine, "the triumph of republican pride over woman's gentler feelings, over pity and humanity—for why should you wish this poor youth to pine for you in a hopeless passion, in order to give you an opportunity of displaying the heartless triumph of a politician? Oh, fy, Lucy! where is your generosity, where is your christianity?"

"Lost, eclipsed, annihilated, for the moment I own, in a base and sordid selfishness; and I am ashamed of myself; however, it is past, and 'Richard's himself again.' But hither comes Lord Shirley."

As soon as he entered, with some archness, but more embarrassment of manner, he began to ask Lucy if it were possible for him to bribe over to the cause of the aristocracy so formidable a foe to it as herself, by the offer of making her a countess.

"No," replied Lucy, firmly, yet laughing and blushing as she spoke, for she thought the earl was not joking only—"No; you cannot make me a countess yourself, and you are the only earl who could be worthy the surrender of my principles and my consistency."

"I am glad to hear it," said the earl; "for now my mind is easy; as I have to own to you, Miss Merle, that Lord Livesay, but for my representations, would have nourished his partiality into a violent passion, and was on the point of paying his addresses to you."

"And you prevented him, Shirley! How unkind!"

"No, my dearest Catherine, not so; I trust I have been only just and honourable; for it would have gratified my feelings excessively to have seen our friend elevated to a rank which she was formed to adorn."

"Lord Shirley," said Lucy, a tear of strong emotion glittering in her eye, "I am prouder of that tribute of praise and friendship from you, than I should have ever been of wearing your friend's coronet. But pray explain to me this noble daring of the young earl. Ah! I see he has profited by the wise lines in Hudibras—'He who fights and runs away may live to fight another day.' And so it was fear of me that drove him away! Well, it is better as it is; for, if I had been a countess, murder would have been the consequence, for the honourable Mrs. Baynton would have died of it!"

"Hush, hush! Spare my aunt, I desire. But how well she behaves!—does she not, Shirley?"

"To be sure I have to make the *amende honorable;* for you know I behaved ill enough just now, and I will tell tales of myself when the earl has set me the example."

Lord Shirley then related what had passed, omitting only his description of Lucy's mother; for he owned the manner in which he had described her as likely to harangue at her own table; and Lucy declared she liked herself better at second-hand than she thought she should.

When Lord Shirley had ended, Lucy gravely told him she was excessively obliged to him, and she rejoiced at all he had done, because she felt that she could not have returned the affection with which Lord Livesay had honoured her, even if her repugnance to marriage could be conquered; and that she should have been sorry indeed to have occasioned that terrible misery—a hopeless attachment. And Lord Shirley had not only the satisfactory consciousness of having acted right, but of having his motives properly appreciated by one of the persons most interested in their result.

The General was also let into the secret; and he, like Catherine, was mortified at first that the elevation of his young favourite was not to take place. While this conversation was passing, Melvyn had called and been denied; and he suspected by the servant's manner that the family were at home. Excessive self-love converts even affronts into proofs of regard; and Melvyn hoped they were at home and denied, because he thought it a proof that Lord Shirley's jealousy had influenced the General to act thus. However, he resolved to call again; and he did so the next day. Now then the case was clear; he saw the General sitting reading in his study, and still he was denied to him. "Poor Miss Shirley!" thought he, "at least I will give her the power of choice; they shall not force her cousin on her acceptance, if she really prefers me, as I suspect she does." And as soon as he returned to town he wrote a letter to Catherine, which began by complaining that he was not allowed to see her, and finished by offering her, though very humbly, his hand and heart.

CHAPTER XVII.

The General was with Catherine when she received this letter, and in the first moment of her astonishment she exclaimed—"Here is a letter from Mr. Melvyn! How strange!"

"Strange indeed, child!" cried the General, laying down his spectacles; "what should he write to you about?" But perceiving her covered with blushes, he suspected the truth. "So so," said he, "I suppose it is an offer of marriage, is it not?"

"I can't—can't say it is not," replied Catherine hesitating.

"Come, let me judge for myself, child!"

"Is it right to show such things?"

"Perfectly so, surely, to a grandfather, and necessary to be shown to an accepted lover, especially one with whom from his nature you ought to be particularly open."

"Particularly open! I am sorry for it," said Catherine sighing, and giving him the letter with reluctance.

"Upon my word, a very humble modest letter as may be! But, Catherine, Shirley must know of this." Then without awaiting her answer he went in search of the earl.

"Here, Lionel," said he, (not seeing Lucy Merle was in the room,) "Here is an offer of marriage from Melvyn to Catherine. It is a pity, is it not, that it did not come before, to give her an opportunity of making her election between you?"

"You are laughing, General, but I am in earnest when I say that I sincerely wish it had. But how has Catherine answered it?"

The General turning round now saw Lucy Merle. "My dear," said he, "you ought not to have known this; it is indelicate to mention such things, except where it is unavoidable; but I know you are discreet, and can keep a secret."

"And so," cried Lucy, "he has really offered to her? I wish I might answer the letter."

"I should like to see how you would do it," said Lord Shirley. "General, surely, as she knows of the offer, she may see the manner in which it was made?" And Lucy read the letter—

"I would answer it thus," said she, sitting down and writing:—

"Sir,—Under no possible circumstances could I have had the power or inclination to accept the offer you have made me.

"CATHERINE SHIRLEY."

Catherine entered the drawing-room just as this letter was reading; and in a degree of almost indignant perturbation desired to know to what that letter was an answer.

The question remained unanswered, for a certain degree of shame kept her auditors silent; and Catherine continued, "If this letter be intended as an answer to one I have received, and which ought not to have been thus canvassed, I pronounce it to be improper and unfeeling; and I also declare that I will allow no one but myself to answer the letter in question." So saying, she took up her letter which lay on the table, and before any one spoke she had disappeared.

"She is quite right," said the General, "and we are wrong."

Lord Shirley did not speak; but he covered his face with his hands, for there was a severe struggle between his sense of right and his jealousy. Lucy Merle's short and unfeeling reply to Melvyn's offer had flattered and soothed his jealousy; Catherine's reprobation of that reply had irritated it. Still, he knew that she was right, and Lucy wrong; while Lucy, confounded at having incurred the evident displeasure of her friend, avowedly went in search of her, to humble herself before her. But she sought her in vain below stairs; and when she knocked at her door up stairs, she was informed that she was busy, and could not see her yet.

Perhaps there are few things more appalling than the displeasure, on principle, of an habitually mild, forgiving, and fine-tempered being—it seems to throw such deep shade of blame on the offender! for, how strong and how just must the provocation be, that can call forth the expression of resentment from a creature meek from nature, and still more so from principle! Lucy did not know how to endure this proof of Catherine's indignation; and rushing down stairs she burst into the room where the gentlemen were, saying, "She is so angry, she will not see me!"

This unusual indulgence of anger in a being so gentle as Catherine, was not heard by Lord Shirley without very painful sensations; for it was a proof how strongly she resented any thing disrespectful to his rival Melvyn; and an agonizing suspicion withered the blossoms of his successful love. But while they were thinking over in uneasy silence this unwonted conduct in Catherine, she entered with all the calm dignity in her manner indicative of a mind at ease with itself, and her first words apologized to Lucy for not having admitted her. "The truth was," said she, "I was writing my answer to Mr. Melvyn, and I did not like to be interrupted."

"It was an important task, no doubt," observed Lord Shirley.

"It was," answered Catherine. "When a man has paid a woman the greatest compliment any man can pay her, namely, expressed his willingness to trust his happiness in her hands, he has a right to expect civility at least, though expressed in such guarded language as wholly to preclude hope. To tell Mr. Melvyn that I was already engaged to you, my dear lord, before either my aunt or your own family are acquainted with our engagement, would have been improper in the highest degree; nor could I have mentioned it even had the case been different; because it would have seemed like giving that engagement as the reason of my refusal, and not the rejecting sentiments of my heart."

"True, very true," said the General and Lucy both at once.

"Then, how did you word your refusal?—Is it gone?" asked Lord Shirley, eagerly.

"It is."

"My dear girl," cried the General, "we should not have objected, I am sure, to whatever you thought proper to write, but I hope you can show us a copy of your answer."

"No doubt; and I hope you will own that

my answer, though sent without your approbation, is not wholly unworthy of it." So saying, she presented it to them; and it was as follows:—

"Sir,—I beg leave to thank you very respectfully, for the obliging intentions and flattering wishes expressed in the letter which I have had the honour to receive from you; but I must, at the same time, assure you that it is equally out of my *power*, as my *inclination*, to grant you such a return as you solicit; and that I never can be more to you than

"Your sincere well-wisher,

"And obliged humble servant,

"CATHERINE SHIRLEY."

"And pray, were certain words scored in the original, as these are?" asked Lord Shirley.

"Certainly."

"Well, then, I have generosity enough to pity Melvyn." But Lord Shirley still repined in his heart, at the tenderness of feeling towards Melvyn, as he thought it, which had made Catherine angry with her friend; and that decision of character, which had led her to write and send her refusal, without showing it to the General.

"I always thought, early in our acquaintance," said he to himself, "that she had great independence and proud decision of character; no desirable qualities in a wife;—but then they are counterbalanced by so many virtues!"

Lord Shirley was right in considering Melvyn as an object of pity when he received Catherine's answer. For he was a libertine, loving for the first time in his life; and Catherine's timid manner in his presence, united to Lord Shirley's jealousy, had really given him strong hopes that his affection was returned. But there was nothing in her letter for even his vanity to hang a hope upon; and he, who heretofore had never sighed in vain, was not only a rejected lover, but had put it in the power of the proud Shirleys to represent him as such. But if they did so represent him, he was resolved to deny the fact; and by looks, and nods, and winks,—a language he was completely master of,—he resolved to insinuate that, if he had been inclined to try his fortune with Miss Shirley, he should certainly have succeeded.

"I think," said the General, two days after this happened, "that I have indulged your whims long enough, and that etiquette demands I should write to my sister, and you to yours, Lionel, and so on to those who have a right to expect such a communication."

The earl and Catherine reluctantly assented to the necessity; and accordingly they both wrote whatever letters they judged necessary.

The letters of the sisters, who were both settled in Scotland, were cold, but civil; and Mrs. Baynton's was very like herself, for it was as follows:

"Dear Brother—I congratulate you on Miss Shirley's great good luck; she is the most fortunate of her sex; and I sincerely hope she will do nothing to disgrace the high situation and the noble husband she has so unexpectedly obtained;—I say unexpectedly, for I had no doubt but that she would have taken up with Melvyn,—and in such things I have a sharp discerning eye,—but I conclude she has thought better of it. I intend to pay my compliments to you in form to-morrow, but shall return at night. I suppose, brother, now you are going to lose your idol, you will want me to come back to you, in order to resume the management of your house; but I beg leave to inform you that I am going to assume the government of a house of my own, and shall no longer require the protection of a brother.

"Your affectionate sister,

"JANE BAYNTON."

"This is a very strange letter," said the General; "I protest I believe the old lady is going to be married,—though as to requiring my protection no longer, I have thought she had no need of it these five-and-thirty years. My poor child! it is evident she is wounded, not pleased, at your happy prospects; and I dare say in her heart she is sorry you did not marry Melvyn."

"I am sure, sir," said Catherine, "you misjudge my poor aunt. But let me read the letter myself." And when read, not even Catherine's charity could form a favourable judgment of the heart and spirit of the writer.

"Forgive my freedom," cried Lucy; "but I must say that, if I too had been going to be a countess, I much fear that the coroner's inquest would be now sitting in New Street."

Mrs. Baynton did come to dinner the next day; and when she coldly saluted and congratulated Catherine, she turned her cheek to the earl, and he was obliged to touch it with his unwilling lips; but she scarcely deigned to notice Lucy.

"So," said she, "good people," when the servants had left the room after dinner, "though you have been so much out of the world, you have not been unnoticed by it, I can tell you; and a most ridiculous report has been in circulation, namely, that the earls Shirley and Livesay were going to lead to the altar Miss Shirley and her friend Miss Merle. For my part, I believed both reports equally false, but one I was sure was unfounded. Silly and drunken and profligate as the poor Lord Livesay is, I do not think him likely to marry in that way; but I thought it probable that he might admire and follow Miss Merle. I am told, Lord Shirley, that he has turned off an old mistress that he had—is that true?"

"I make it a point never to allude to arrangements of this nature, in the company of young and modest women," replied Lord Shirley, resenting this malignant attack on

Lucy; "but if you will favour me with a private conference, I shall be happy to give you any information on the subject that you may require." Mrs. Baynton bit her lip, and was sulky and silent directly. "But," continued he, "I have something to say relative to the report, which you so confidently denied, Mrs. Baynton; namely, that I am convinced in my own mind, if my friend Lucy had smiled in the slightest degree on the young earl, she would have had him at her feet, coronet and all."

"And so am I,"—"And so am I," said the General and Catherine.

"Well, you are mighty credulous," replied Mrs. Baynton; "and I really believe that young person has bitten you with her democracy, for you do not seem at all shocked at the idea of such a mis-alliance."

"Oh! *à-propos* of alliances; Mrs. Baynton, are you about to form an alliance yourself," asked the General, "for your letter seems to imply as much?"

Mrs. Baynton changed colour, fanned herself, looked important, simpered, drew up, frowned; and at length said, "Brother, I am arrived at years of discretion, and—"

"Yes," interrupted the General, "long enough to have survived them, I fear."

"You may be as sarcastic as you please, General Shirley; but I have an independent fortune, and I have a right to do what I please with it; therefore I must trouble you not to distress yourself needlessly about my concerns. You may depend upon it, when I marry (and here she forced a laugh) you shall have wedding-favours, not excepting Miss Merle."

"The first and last favour, madam," said Lucy, "I have ever received or shall receive from you; and I shall value it accordingly."

"Take care, take care, sister, that your choice is such as not to make your wedding-favours too strikingly typical of your bridegroom's smiles,—bright, but transient in the duration of their brightness; and worn in public for a week, then thrown aside and visible no more."

"Very fanciful and pretty indeed;—but really it would be more agreeable to me if you would call another subject. Pray what are the usual amusements at Hampton? besides reading sermons and praying, I mean."

"Oh, various!" answered the General, looking steadily at her; "and, strange to say, we contrive to kill time here without slandering our neighbours, repeating impertinent reports, or saying rude or severe things of people, or to them. Then, having thus passed the day, we think we may venture to close it, if so inclined, with prayer, and preaching too if we like it, because we humbly hope that to preaching we have joined practice."

"You have practised preaching, I see very clearly, and really have made a great progress for the time, brother, he, he, he! But tell me, young ladies, is it one of the holy habits of Hampton to sit over the wine with the gentlemen? for it is getting very late, and I am going to an early party this evening." Catherine immediately rose, and the three ladies retired to the drawing-room.

"That foolish old woman has alarmed and vexed me much," said the General; "for, however provoking and odd, she is my sister, my only sister, after all; and changed as that face is now,—though she looks very well for her years,—it is one which I have looked upon all my life, and I should grieve to see those eyes not only dimmed by age, but also by tears wrung from them by ill-usage."

"And why do you suppose she is likely to be exposed to it?"

"Oh, I am sure she has a matrimonial plan in her head; and I know her so well, that if I were to hint to her the necessity and precaution of having her own fortune settled on her, she would fancy I spoke from interested motives, and was afraid that I and Catherine should not be the better for it. I wish you could hint the propriety of such unromantic security to her."

"How can I, my dear sir, when I am going to marry your heiress, and hers if the law had to make her will?"

"True, true; but perhaps my fears are groundless; but that new wig, and that additional tint of rouge, and that comical air, as if she was brooding over some pleasant secret, all combine to give me painful suspicions. However, sufficient to the day is the evil thereof; and why should I damp my joy at the prospect of a marriage which is all my heart can wish, by the fear of one which may perhaps never take place?"

Mrs. Baynton, meanwhile, was showing off in the drawing-room; and she talked so much of a Mr. Delaney, and repeated his sayings, and how he looked when such things were said, and so often mentioned him as having been her beau at this place and the other, that Lucy was convinced there was something particular between them, and she gravely asked her whether Mr. Delaney was an elderly gentleman.

"Elderly? No indeed!" was the abrupt answer. And Lucy ventured to ask no more questions.

At length her carriage was announced, and Lord Shirley came to hand her to it.

"Well, Jane, good night, God bless you!" said the General kissing her; "and let me remind you, that should you ever need a protector and a home, while I live you are sure of both."

The General could not say this unmoved; but Mrs. Baynton heard it so; and muttering a "Dear me, brother!" sprung youthfully into her chariot.

It was now their usual hour for music; and the lute, the guitar, and voice of Catherine had always power to dispel the General's

gloom; and Mrs. Baynton and her strangeness were forgotten.

Two days afterwards, however, the General received a letter from his sister, signed "Jane Delaney," telling him she was married that morning to the man of her heart; a gentleman of ancient family and respectable fortune. The General was at first speechless with consternation; for he knew Delaney to be a complete man of the town. True, he was of an ancient family; but he had entirely dissipated his fortune, and no one knew how he lived, but it was supposed he lived by gambling; and though it was no wonder that Delaney, at the age of fifty, should be looking out to recruit his finances by a wealthy marriage, still it was surprising, he thought, that his sister, to whom his character must have been well known, should have thus risked her fortune and her happiness.

"If she has not had her fortune so tied up that he can't touch it, she is a ruined woman!" cried he. "And this secresy convinces me that no settlements have been made! Do, my dear lord, go to London, and try to find out whether my suspicions be just or not; and, if possible, contrive to make the best of what cannot be helped."

The earl did so; and found on inquiry that his relation and her fortune also were both entirely at the mercy of a very dissipated man. On hearing this, Lord Shirley hesitated not a moment, but went to pay his compliments to the new-married pair, who had taken a house near Sheen.

After the first congratulations were over, he desired to see the grounds, which were extensive and well laid out; and as Mr. Delaney alone accompanied him, the earl delicately but firmly represented to him, that not having his wife's fortune settled on her, was full of injustice to her and danger to himself. "For you know," said he, "what your habits are; and if there was money tied up which you could not play away, you would always have a resource left for yourself."

To be brief, Delaney was prevailed upon to let two-thirds of his wife's fortune be settled on her. But in order to effect this, Lord Shirley (exacting at the same time a solemn promise of secresy) gave Mr. Delaney for his own use a considerable sum of money; but one which his generous nature did not think too much to give, in order to benefit even an unamiable fellow-creature and relation.

It was now universally known that Lord Shirley and his beautiful cousin were soon to be united, and there were two persons who heard the news with the same feelings as beamed in the eyes of Milton's devil when he beheld our first parents in the garden of Eden; but more of them hereafter. Let me now proceed to say, that as soon as the necessary preparations could be made, Lord Shirley received the hand of Catherine at Hampton church; no one being present, according to her particular desire, but the General and her friend. The new-married couple set off immediately on a tour of some length, and Lucy returned in a very depressed state of mind to her home; for she feared, notwithstanding her confidence in Lord Shirley's regard, that the unrestrained intercourse which she had been wont to have with Catherine was now probably lost to her for ever.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Lord Shirley seemed to have now attained the height of his wishes. He was in possession of the only woman whom he had ever loved, and that woman was a treasure of beauty, talents, virtue, and piety. Still there were moments when he was not quite happy. He felt that before he married he ought to have required from Catherine an explanation of that mystery, or that secret, which evidently at times had visibly affected her. Her strong emotion and faintness on the birth-day were, he doubted not, caused by the occasional presence of some object, one too whom she feared he should encounter; and who and what was that object? Has she loved, and loved hopelessly or unworthily, whispered jealousy; and at such moments Lord Shirley's feelings amounted almost to agony. But now, he did not like to require this explanation, partly because he was ashamed to show how long he had remembered the circumstance, and how suspicious it had made him; and secondly, because, when he had hinted at it, however remotely, he saw Catherine assume a cold reserve of manner, which showed him that, if she had a secret, he would be degraded in her eyes by trying to discover it. Lord Shirley felt that before they married, when Catherine conditioned that she should be allowed to keep the Sabbath day as she chose, and not be obliged to have parties or go to parties on that day, he might have said, "I require in return that you should have no reserves from me." And if she had refused to explain the circumstance that distressed him, he might have declined marrying a woman who thought herself justified in having a secret undisclosed to her husband, and was likely therefore to make her husband uneasy; or he would have known on what conditions he was to marry her, and would have made up his mind to the consequences.

"I think, Catherine," said he to her one day on their journey, "I have never seen any symptoms in you of similar seizures to those which you had on the birth-day?"

At that moment Catherine stooped to pick up a brooch which she had drooped; and when she raised up her head again, she

calmly replied, "No, my dear lord, those seizures as you call them are not frequent with me."

"What should I call them, then, if they were not seizures?"

"It is quite immaterial what name you give them," she replied, fixing her eyes on his face, in which she saw an expression of most perturbed curiosity and suspicion; and she sighed with mortification and regret as she beheld it.

"The fourth of June is very near again; perhaps these attacks are yearly ones; perhaps you may be so seized again?"

"Perhaps so," replied Catherine; and evidently changed the conversation.

No man likes to own that he is either suspicious or jealous; therefore Lord Shirley dropped the subject without daring to speak plainer. But Catherine had seen and heard enough to lower the tone of her expectations, had her habitual piety allowed it to be too high. For, blest as she was in a union with a man whom she loved with all the chastised yet fervent tenderness of a woman's lawful love, she saw that there were faults in his nature, which might call forth all her powers of patience and forbearance. "Yes," said Catherine in the solitude of her own room, "even in my brilliant and envied lot, there is enough to keep my convictions alive that this world is a state of probation, not of perfect happiness; and in the midst of my prosperity I 'rejoice with trembling.'"

When Lord and Lady Shirley returned from their tour, a severe trial awaited the affectionate heart of the latter,—and that was the approaching departure of Lucy Merle for America. Her mother was already on the eve of hers, having been sent for by her husband, who had lately been able to procure employment which promised him considerable emolument; and as Mrs. Merle was fondly devoted to him, she resolved to obey his summons instantly, leaving Lucy to settle her affairs, and follow her in another fleet.

Lucy, though she loved her father, was not sorry to remain in England a little longer, and at her own disposal. Her regret at leaving England was, however, lessened by the consciousness that Lady Shirley could not be to her what Catherine Shirley had been. Still she knew that, had she remained in England, she could have seen her whenever she wished it; if she was ill, she could have nursed her; if afflicted, she could have soothed her by participating in her sorrows;—and now the vast Atlantic was to roll between them! "But she will no longer want me," thought the affectionate girl, and she tried to make the selfish yield to the benevolent feeling. It was, however, with grateful joy that she received a note from the earl, informing her that as soon as her mother was sailed, he requested her to consider his house as her home for as long a time as it suited her to remain in England.

At length the day was fixed for Mrs. Merle to leave London; and Catherine, after sitting some time in serious abstraction, told Lord Shirley she was going as soon as she had breakfasted to take leave of Mrs. Merle.

"Then I will have the pleasure of accompanying you," said the earl, "as I am always glad of an opportunity of showing my respect and regard to Miss Merle; and I know she is more pleased with attention to her mother than to herself."

"Most kindly felt, and most kindly meant," replied Catherine with some embarrassment of manner; "but I had rather go alone; and I will tell Mrs. Merle that I alone prevented your accompanying me."

"Rather go alone, Catherine!—That is a mortifying confession both to my self-love and my affection. What can there be in your adieu to Mrs. Merle which I may not witness?"

"Nothing in our adieu, certainly; for I shall not be so much overcome as to make you apprehensive for my life. However," she added after a pause, "if you wish to go, I shall be glad of your company."

"If I were like some men, I should refuse to go after your first refusal."

"But as there are few men like you, my dear Shirley, and you are formed to give, not take an example, I know you will go;" and Lord Shirley, pleased with the compliment, and incapable of acting from the dictates of pique, promised to profit by the permission which she gave.

Lucy's good feelings and her mother's weak ones were gratified by this visit from the earl; and Mrs. Merle repeated her joy at seeing his lordship, and "how good it was in his lordship to call to bid her good-bye," so often, that his lordship was almost sick of his title. —But it was not long before Catherine requested to see Mrs. Merle alone; and Lucy, apologizing to Lord Shirley for leaving him, hastily followed her mother and Catherine.

"Then she had some private business with Mrs. Merle?" thought Lord Shirley. "In vain do I try to conquer my suspicions; there certainly is some mystery hanging over her residence with the Merles!"

It was at least twenty minutes before Lucy returned to the room, and apologized in a fearful and hurried manner for Catherine's continued absence; but at length she herself appeared, followed by Mrs. Merle; and her look was agitated, her cheek pale, while Mrs. Merle's countenance exhibited the traces of recent passion, and her cheeks were flushed with the crimson of strong emotion.

"My dear lord," said Catherine, "I am ready to attend you directly." And the earl rang for the carriage.

Till it was announced, no word was spoken;

and when she rose to depart, Catherine coldly took Mrs. Merle's hand, and wished her health and happiness. Lord Shirley bowed at a distance, and echoed the good wishes, while Mrs. Merle with rather a haughty toss of her head wished them the same; and Lucy, giving way to a violent burst of tears, rushed past them, and left the room.

As soon as they were in the carriage, Catherine leaned back, and, throwing her handkerchief over her face, gave way herself to tears, and so violently as to excite Lord Shirley's wonder more than his sympathy.

"What can have overset you in this manner?" said he; "certainly not parting, though it be for ever, with that disagreeable woman; especially as I saw little cordiality in your last adieu."

"No; I am not suffering from grief for her departure," replied Catherine; "but from disappointment. I hoped before she went that she would have enabled me to do an act of justice, and she has refused to do it."

"What act of justice?" asked Lord Shirley anxiously.

"I cannot explain myself," answered Catherine; "and I conjure you, if you love me, to ask no further, but change the conversation."

"How strange and mysterious!" said the earl; "but so conjured, I must obey; yet I must beg you to remember, that if I am confiding, you ought to be generous, and not impose a greater weight on the love and confidence of a husband than he can with propriety be expected to bear."

Catherine spoke not; but looking at Lord Shirley with great tenderness, she pressed his hand affectionately between both hers; and some time before they reached Grosvenor Square, Lord Shirley had yielded to her efforts to change the conversation.

I am now going to enter upon a very painful task. To take the mask from vice, and to exhibit both a man and woman under the influence of passions the most various and diabolical,—and leagued for the purpose of destroying the peace and blackening the reputation, of that virtue that never even in thought purposely offended them, is a necessity from which, while yielding to it, my inmost heart recoils; and I hope I may be allowed to hint at crimes, rather than detail them, in the course of the following narrative.

Sophia Clermont was the spoiled heiress of a weak unprincipled father. Her mother died early, and her father married again; but as his second wife had unfortunately no children, the little Sophia still remained a first object, and Mrs. Clermont took as much pains to spoil her as her father did. But I am weary of detailing the progress of ruin which is visible in the career of spoiled children; tempers uncorrected; passions unrestrained; and selfishness, the parent of callousness of heart, universally triumphant!

Sophia Clermont had great quickness of talents; and though misled by the bad examples of her father and her mother-in-law, she felt a most decided contempt for the beings whose vices had corrupted her. She discerned in the latter, a woman of impure conversation, of lax morality, and of idle habits; and in the former she beheld a man by turns a tyrant and a driveller, the uxorious idolater of his wife, and the frowning malevolent tyrant. The consequences of association with such a pair were only too natural; the purity and innocence of her mind were destroyed by the wife and the moral restraints weakened, if not annihilated; while the religious ones were utterly banished by the avowed scepticism of the husband.

Sophia Clermont's knowledge of evil was not long confined to theory only; but good luck, and the confidence which she fearlessly and unblushingly placed in the parents who had prepared her young mind for guilt, saved her reputation from the danger that threatened it; and when her father and his wife were carried off by a bad fever, at little more than the middle stage of their existence, Miss Clermont appeared as a young and beautiful heiress in the world of fashion; and spite of her manners, which were almost too seducing to be consistent with innate propriety, she was considered as an innocent woman, and no suspicion of her early frailty had ever reached the scenes in which she now moved. Year, however, succeeded to year, and still she was unmarried; and though suitor succeeded to suitor, no one bore away the envied prize. Perhaps she did not feel for any one a passion strong enough to conquer the scruples which the consciousness of secret guilt might oppose to her marrying; for I believe there can be few women so depraved, as not to shrink with a feeling of almost virtuous horror from the idea of giving to the honourable protection of a confiding husband, a woman consciously stained with previous though secret criminality. Be that as it may, Sophia Clermont was still unmarried; and from the attractions of her person and countenance, and the seduction of her manners, was still the terror of wives and the envy of single women, when Lord Shirley first entered on his career of fashionable life, and was consequently ambitious of being known to the syren who had fascinated so many of his acquaintance.

The impression which each made on the other, though equal in strength, was different in its nature. Lord Shirley felt the full force of Sophia's power to charm as a mistress, but he felt not the slightest wish to secure her as his wife; and he therefore felt she was a woman to be shunned, for his honour and his principles prevented his wishing to become her seducer, and she was certainly not the

sort of woman to whom he wished to give his name, and his rank.

Miss Clermont, on the contrary, beheld in Lord Shirley the only man to whom she could ever bear to surrender her liberty; and he became very soon the only wish and passion of her impassioned nature. In vain did Lord Shirley avoid her society. She contrived to be in his way wherever he was expected. Yet at first so guarded was her manner, and so timid her expression, that though Lord Shirley suspected her attachment, he could not be quite certain of it; but finding this method of proceeding too slow and too unsure, she suffered herself to give way to the misery of unrequited love; and by her sighs, and the mournful tenderness of her countenance, wherever she met the earl, she showed herself given up to that abandonment of tender sorrow, which, though it might flatter his vanity, disgusted his sense of propriety, and made her further than ever from the attainment of her end.

In the meanwhile, Lord Shirley's insensibility to the honour of carrying off the greatest beauty and heiress of the day, and of conquering that invulnerable heart which had so long been besieged in vain, was the wonder of everybody who knew not the earl's strength of mind, and the rigidness of his ideas with respect to female conduct and manners. He was too rich to be bribed by her wealth, too young and too much admired to want to marry the first beauty whom he saw, and valued the possession of his heart at too high a rate, to yield it to the weak woman who gave him hers unsought.

Sophia Clermont, to whom conquest had hitherto been habitual, and who had therefore never expected to fail of making any man her slave whom she wished to captivate, was rendered nearly frantic by the insensibility of the earl; and as she had never been taught to restrain any passion within the bounds either of propriety or virtue, she resolved to try, as a last resource, whether Lord Shirley's vanity might not be made the means of awakening his sensibility. Accordingly, she got a friend to hint to him that a young and beautiful heiress was dying for him, and that a physician was actually called in.

Lord Shirley affected to laugh at the tale as false, and coolly said, "Poor thing! how cruelly neglected must the education of that young person have been, who could be so completely subdued by love for any man!"

The next and most daring step was to address the earl himself, which she did certainly in touching and impassioned language, stating herself to be as she believed on her death-bed, and therefore she hoped the most rigid of women would think her privileged to own and claim his pity for a hopeless and ardent attachment which had cut her off in the very prime of her existence;—and this letter concluded with an earnest wish to see him before she breathed her last.

Lord Shirley could not read this letter unmoved; and, however he might despise her weakness, he pitied her sufferings. But he did not like to grant her the desired interview, unless he was sure she was really dying; as his suspicious nature, and indeed his knowledge of character led him to think that the woman who had so little self-restriction as to give way in so improper a manner to the indulgence of her feelings, might also be artful enough to feign the danger to which she was really not exposed. But Sophia's physician was a young man, and very much devoted to her and her charms. He therefore, either from want of skill and experience to form a right judgment of her symptoms, or from being led by partiality to believe her account of her state, rather than trust to his own opinion, assured the earl that he believed Miss Clermont to be in the greatest danger, and to be sinking very fast; adding, with tears in his eyes, "And the world is going to lose its brightest ornament!"

Lord Shirley, on hearing this, was shocked at his suspicions; and being equally shocked at the idea of that untimely fate which he had so innocently occasioned, he hesitated no longer to grant the requested interview. Accordingly, he wrote a guarded answer, but full of respectful feeling towards the unhappy writer of the letter, promising to call on her at any hour she would appoint. She fixed an hour the next day, and Lord Shirley was punctual to his appointment.

Sophia Clermont had intended to make a very passionate display of her tenderness, in this interview, which took place in a room darkened in order to hide, not the ravages which grief and sickness had made in her person, but to conceal the glaring fact that they had made none worth noticing, while she reclined on a *chaise lounge* in a very becoming undress and supported by pillows; but as soon as she saw Lord Shirley, all her intended acting was lost in real feeling, and the paltry artifice of her character was annihilated for a while by the manly and ingenuous sensibility of his. They were both of them at first too much agitated to speak. And when Lord Shirley spoke, he expressed with great energy his sorrow for her situation, and his hope that she would still recover.

"To recover, is neither my hope nor my wish," she replied; "but I ventured to request this interview in order to beg a favour of you, my lord;—I want you to promise to accept the bequest I wish to make you, and then almost the only care I have in dying will be removed."

"I would do any thing, however painful to me, to oblige you; and I will even, if you desire it, accept a bequest, but I hope not a large one."

Sophia faintly smiled, and said "Certainly a very large bequest, but not one of money." It was her poor, as she called them, on an estate of hers that joined one of Lord Shirley's; and on this estate she had lately, in imitation of him, and in order to gain his good opinion, erected schools and cottages, and she now requested him to see that these institutions were properly kept up, and her poor properly maintained out of the funds for that purpose which she had left.

Lord Shirley, relieved in mind by this explanation, readily promised compliance; and as he looked at her, Sophia saw in his expressive countenance, that never before had his eyes dwelt on her with such tender admiration. This conviction awakened such hope in her bosom, that, conscious she could not long continue the dying weakness which it was her interest to affect, she complained of being very faint, and extending her beautiful hand to Lord Shirley, begged him to leave her. Lord Shirley respectfully pressed her hand to his lips, and slowly withdrew, but looking back when he reached the door, saw the invalid raising herself on her couch without any great apparent effort; while, as she bent forward, the light from the only open part of the window, fell upon her face, and he saw with some surprise that that lovely face had not lost much of its bloom, and certainly none of its roundness; and yet she was said to be dying, and she said so herself!

This sight made him suspect the reality of her danger, and he began also to think the bequest ostentatious. In short, when once suspicion and distrust get possession of the mind, their influence increases every moment, and Lord Shirley almost repented of having even for a moment thought of administering to her the medicine of hope.

Lord Shirley had met on the stairs a friend of Sophia—one of those women who have that sort of profligate unprincipled good-nature, which leads them to wish to say pleasant rather than true things; and this lady assured her that she met Lord Shirley in such a transport of grief, as could only proceed from such tender pity as must, if not already love, certainly become so in time.

Sophia's vanity made her easily believe this welcome tale, while her reason forgot to suggest, that if this were the state of Lord Shirley's heart, what motive could there be for his not revealing it? However, she now thought that, after having caused herself to be represented not only as at the point of death, but also as dead, it was high time to end the farce, and seem to be slowly recovering; which she did, to the great joy of Lord Shirley, who when he heard she was no more, had endured self-upbraidings, and misery, for which his reason disowned all necessity, though his feelings persisted in prompting them.

Sophia soon assured him she was better, under her own hand, attributing her recovery to the effect of the kind interest which she was told he had expressed for her; and assuring him, that having seen death so near, and being weaned by this awful trial from the passions and their warfare; all she now wished for was to pass the remainder of her days, which she felt would not be long, in the society of the few whom her head and heart approved; and the only thing she required of the earl was, occasionally to join the select society that had promised to assemble at her house, during her slow convalescence.

Lord Shirley thought it would be churlish in him to refuse this request; though by unreservedly complying with it he exposed himself to the influence of such fascinations as few men could have been able to resist; and Sophia's presence became every day more necessary to his amusement if not to his happiness.

But she presumed too much and too soon on the advantage which she had gained. Again she allowed her eyes to talk a stronger language than that of friendship, and Lord Shirley was once more on his guard. One evening she had taken him into another room to consult him on some improvements which she wished to make in her plans for the poor, one of the earl's favourite pursuits; and in discussing them, they showed such a marked similarity in their views and sentiments, and the earl regarded her with such animated and tender pleasure, that she unguardedly exclaimed, "O Lord Shirley! united as we thus are in the most important and best pursuits of life, why cannot our union be otherwise completed? Is it, tell me—is it indeed impossible that I may ever hope to be more to you than I now am?"

Lord Shirley, thus taken by surprise, was for a moment unable to answer. At length he recovered himself, and with some firmness of manner said, "This is surely not a proper time or place to discuss so delicate a point; but, if you wish it, I will no longer shrink from meeting the subject fairly, and I will do myself the honour of calling on you at any time you like for that purpose."

Sophia, though she saw in this proposal as much to fear as to hope, consented to it; and a day and hour were fixed. The earl began by assuring her that he thought her not only the most beautiful and most attractive woman also that he had ever seen, but the most eloquent and the cleverest woman that he had ever conversed with; and such was and ever had been her influence over his feelings, that it was the completest victory which his reason and his self-knowledge ever gained over him, when they positively forbade him to seek her hand in marriage.

"Positively forbid!" exclaimed Sophia; "Oh! do not say so, or you will drive me to distraction."

"Better that I should do so before than after marriage; and I certainly should make you mad, and you would make me so, if we were man and wife."

"How so?—Impossible!"

"No—possible and certain;—for I am by nature jealous, and your manners are such as to drive a jealous husband into frenzy."

"My manners!"

"Yes; they are so universally and so particularly alluring, that almost (excuse my boldness) in the words of an old song, 'the hope they give prevents desire;' and your evident thirst for admiration robs you in my opinion of nearly all your just claim to it."

"You are severe, my lord," she replied, "but I must own that till I knew you I only wished for general admiration;—now, there is nothing I would not do, nothing I would not sacrifice, consistent with virtue and reputation, to gain from you one approving smile. I am very young, and my manners may yet be altered to any thing, give me but a sufficient motive for making the change. Do let me try to be what you wish; and do not, for mercy's sake, listen to the present prohibitions of your reason, but wait for your final decision, till you have seen what I am capable of being to please you."

"Alas!" cried Lord Shirley, shaking his head, "habit is a second nature; and you are going to alter yours, not from a conviction that those habits were always wrong, but in order to carry a point, and please me. What then shall convince me, when that point is gained, that you will not relapse again on the first temptation, and, like the cat in the fable, pursue your original propensities?"

Sophia bit her lip; for she saw how strongly Lord Shirley's sane judgment was against her, and that his admiration of her was not strong enough to resist it; however, she again begged him not to be rash in his decisions, but allow her to new-model her manners, in order to prove that she was wax in his hands, and that he could make of her whatever he chose.

"I will continue to visit you," said he, "but I solemnly assure you that I look on myself as a free man; and let you improve as you may, I consider myself as having given you no claims on me."

He did visit her; and Sophia, having become modest in her style of dressing and reserved in her general appearance, won so much on the earl's confidence and esteem, while his self-love was so gratified by the metamorphosis he had occasioned, that those of her female friends, who with seeming pity, but real malignity, had told her she was always called "Poor Sophia Clermont" ever since it was seen that she loved Lord Shirley in vain, were now glad to flatter the vanity they had formerly wounded, in order to obtain favour with one who would, they expected, as the Countess Shirley, be more followed than ever, and give the finest parties in town.—And it is probable that Sophia would have succeeded at last in fixing the affections of the fastidious earl, and have forced him to marry her in spite of his judgment, had not his beautiful cousin been introduced to his knowledge,—showing him what he as yet had never seen, a woman who seemed to be indifferent to admiration in general, and wholly regardless whether he admired her or not. This novelty and this character immediately engaged his attention; still, when mortified at Catherine's coldness, he used to take refuge from it in the ill-concealed tenderness of the impassioned Sophia. But then, when he contrasted her passionate regard, her passionate glances, with the modest friendship and the chaste expression of his lovely relation, he again turned from Sophia, as Hercules did from Pleasure, and fixed his choice on Virtue in the shape of Catherine.

Sophia soon heard of the General's newfound heiress, and she read her fate in the cold abstracted manner of Lord Shirley towards her, and in his blushing cheek, and his hesitating, evasive answers, whenever he was interrogated respecting his fair cousin; while his visits at her house became very soon unfrequent. She however restrained herself within some bounds, till she heard that their marriage was certainly to take place before the birth-day, and that Catherine was to appear there for the first time as the Countess Shirley.

Even to the mildest nature, even to the best regulated mind, I believe the torture of jealousy to be full of maddening influence; what then must it be to a woman unused to control her passions, and who, till she knew Lord Shirley, had known not an ungratified wish! At length with a sort of desperate firmness, she wrote to Lord Shirley the following note:

"Miss Clermont presents her compliments to Lord Shirley, and requests the honour of seeing him at her house this morning at two o'clock, to speak to him on a little business."

The unusual coldness of the note surprised but did not alarm Lord Shirley; on the contrary he was glad to find her style so much altered for the better, and he waited upon her with great alacrity. It was not now necessary for her to darken the room in order to conceal that no paleness had robbed her cheek of its beauty; for pale as that of death was now the cheek of Sophia Clermont, and livid as its lip was that which, now, parched and quivering with emotion, assumed a ghastly smile as the earl entered, and bade him follow her to her *boudoir*. When there, she fixed on him her now dim but still piercing eyes, and asked him whether it was true that he was on the eve of marriage with his cousin.

"Though I deny your right to question me," replied the earl, "I answer, no!"

"Are you engaged to her?"

"No."

"Have you ever proposed marriage to her?"

"Never."

"Do you mean to do so?"

"Some time or other probably I shall do it."

"You love her then?"

"I am now convinced I do."

"And you have the barbarity to tell me this in spite of my love for you, and in defiance of my claims?"

"Claims you have none—I never directly or indirectly encouraged your tenderness; else I should have blamed myself, a blame I am now wholly free from. Nay, I have been more on my guard than most men would probably have been; for you know that my conduct to you has always been that of a brother only, though some men would have allowed themselves to express fondness for you, even though conscious that they felt not love; therefore I have no grounds for the slightest self-reproach, and am at perfect liberty to love, to address, and to marry any woman I choose."

"Undoubtedly—undoubtedly," cried Sophia in a quick and hurried manner, "undoubtedly. But I will not live to see it." Then snatching up a pistol concealed under a sofa pillow, she endeavoured to put it to her temples; but not so quickly but that Lord Shirley had time to wrest it from her grasp, and Sophia, full of agony and shame, sunk back upon the sofa.

Lord Shirley felt so shocked at sight of her misery, that had he yielded to his feelings, he would have clasped the poor sufferer to his bosom, and have wept over her with anxious and even fond compassion. But he knew that such proofs of tenderness would injure, not cure her; and that, whatever he felt in his heart, his conduct must be cold, if not in a measure, severe and cruel.

"Rash woman!" he cried in a firm voice and chilling manner, "what could you expect by thus giving way to such a wicked indulgence of passion? Could you hope to make me pity and regret you? If so, how vain the hope, how inadequate the means! After the first dreadful shock was over, do you think I could be so imbecile as to regret that I did not love and marry a being so much the slave of ungovernable impulse as yourself? No, dear Miss Clermont! if you wish me to honour and admire you, live and conquer this unworthy love; for that love in a woman, whoever be the object of it, must always be unworthy of her, which is wholly unsolicited and wholly unrequited."

"I thank you, my lord," cried Sophia rising, and nearly choked with indignation and resentment. "I thank you for two things: in the first place, for having saved me from the folly and wickedness of suicide; and in the second place, for having taken from me my wish to commit it, at least for your sake, as you have convinced me, by what you have just had the barbarity to utter, that your temper is as malignant as your heart is cruel and unfeeling. Away, and fear not that I shall again attempt my life! No, I despise myself for my past fond folly, and all I regret is, that I ever fed your vanity by an avowal of it!"

Lord Shirley felt his mind excessively relieved by hearing this; and not waiting for a second dismissal, he hastily bowed and withdrew.

Lord Shirley seemed, both by his words and manner, to be so cold, so severe, and so unfeeling, that a woman of Sophia's violent spirit could not fail to resent it; and for some days she fancied herself cured of her passion; also, well knowing that Lord Shirley would never reveal what had passed, she went into company as usual, without fear of being an object either of pity or reprobation. But her secret was not so safe as she fancied; for her own maid, knowing of the appointment, had listened at the door, and heard all that passed. However, she kept the secret pretty well, till having quarrelled with her mistress she left the place, and told all she knew to her next lady; who had, however, discretion enough to whisper it *only to two* or *three intimate friends*; by which means the circulation of the anecdote was slow; and it was only just beginning to be known when Lord Shirley handed Miss Clermont to her carriage,—a civility which Melvyn and the duchess had both said he could not help.

It was at this moment of wounded pride and disappointed passion, of hate struggling with still powerful love, and a desire of revenge, perhaps triumphant over every other feeling in the heart of Sophia Clermont, that Melvyn became introduced at her house. Though he had no feeling like love towards her, he admired her style of beauty, and was charmed with her conversation; and while he resolved to profess himself her lover, he knew he must be kindly received, because her reputation was in his power.

He had recently been staying in the village where she was born and where she had passed her youth; and there he contrived to discover a secret relative to her, which if disclosed might drive her out of society, or at least prevent her ever forming a respectable marriage. As their intimacy increased, he gradually hinted at his knowledge, and Sophia soon saw, that instead of wishing to strengthen her in the paths of penitence and virtue, he was desirous of plunging her himself in the same errors which she seemed to have abandoned. And as she was in his power—the consequence was certain. But enough of a picture so disgusting, though I am forced only to vary the scene, not to quit it entirely.

CHAPTER XIX.

I MUST now give some description of the real character of Melvyn. In describing a man wholly absorbed by the desire of revenge inspired by hatred, and that hatred born of long and early jealousy, I trust I am scarcely outstepping the modesty of nature, as jealousy is, I am convinced, as powerful an agent in the moral world, as steam is in the physical one; and that the exertions of the former in their way are as pregnant with sure destruction as the explosions of the latter.

But by jealousy I do not only mean in this case the jealousy attendant on disappointed and ardent love,—I mean a feeling allied to the meaner passion of envy, and which is the result of competition; that feeling which so often makes the man of wealth underrate the riches of his rival in opulence, the professional man underrate the gains of his professional brethren, the author question the reality of his brother author's numerous editions of his works, and the beauty doubt the number and value of a rival beauty's offers.

It was this feeling which laid the foundation of that hate towards Lord Shirley in Melvyn's breast, which the other and more amiable jealousy perfected. At school, Melvyn had no competitor but the young earl—and he and he alone bore away the prizes from Melvyn, which, but for Lord Shirley's superior merit, he would uniformly have obtained. Nor was Lord Shirley less successful in gaining the love of his school-fellows to a much greater degree than he did. They were both leaders of two parties in the school, and those only whom Lord Shirley rejected, enrolled themselves under the banners of Melvyn; for though Melvyn's character was unblemished, and he concealed his vices as carefully as many unguarded youth display theirs, he wanted that generous and manly spirit which always distinguished Lord Shirley; and though the manner of Melvyn was always kind, soft, and insinuating, and none but very acute observers could suspect that his temper was bad and his heart malignant, it never inspired that confidence and that devoted attachment which would at any time have led the followers of Lord Shirley to risk even their lives in his service.

It was, therefore, with a heart full of malevolent and vindictive feeling towards that unconscious earl, that Melvyn left school and went to College, where again Lord Shirley and he were competitors, and an academical honour was adjudged to the former, for which he had vainly toiled. And there was still another reason for added hatred; Melvyn, by means of a very active agent on such occasions, whom he had in his pay, had conveyed a beautiful girl from her father's house, who happened to be a tenant of Lord Shirley's; and the poor man, in the agony of his heart, went to the young earl, who was, he knew, ever ready to listen to the tale of distress, and as ready to redress wrong wherever it existed.

Lord Shirley instantly endeavoured to find out whither the deluded girl had been carried; and having discovered her, he exhibited the exemplary sight of a young and fascinating nobleman exhorting a lovely girl to fly from the temptations which were about to be offered her, and return to the safe and virtuous protection of her half-distracted parents. The consequence of his pure and pious eloquence was, that Lord Shirley bore her away in triumph from the power of Melvyn's agent, who appeared the principal in the business; but as Melvyn had visited the girl under a feigned name, the part which he had in this transaction would have been still unknown, even had his victim owned her apparent lover was not the real one; therefore, though Melvyn experienced severe disappointment, he knew that he was safe every way from detection; still, he could not forgive the cause of his failure, and his hatred of Lord Shirley and desire of revenge became from that moment stronger than ever.

No wonder, therefore, that when the earl a few years after deprived him as we have seen of the object of his lawful love also, and was the cause of his being refused for the first time in his life, the finishing stroke was given to his desire for vengeance, especially as he fancied Lord Shirley had interfered to prevent his lovely sister Lady Frances from encouraging the addresses which he was once inclined to offer her; and he resolved that the man who had so often wounded his self-love and impeded his success, should, if he could effect the dark and rooted purpose of his soul, be made to feel the results of his deep-rooted resentment; and he well knew that, if he had a heart to conceive, he had also a head to plan and a hand to execute whatever villany his malignity suggested. Such was the man who, soon after the marriage of Lord and Lady Shirley, called, as was his daily custom, at the house of Sophia Clermont.

"So," cried Sophia, "you let that odious saint slip through your fingers at last! How could you be so stupid?—Though I never believed she preferred you to Shirley."

"Nor *I* that Lord Shirley could ever hesitate to prefer her to you—as a *wife*, I mean. But surely I might as well reproach you for letting Shirley escape your snares—you might have contrived to entangle his honour in such a manner that he could not have helped marrying you."

"No! I do not believe that he has so little firmness of character as to have married me had I degraded myself in his eyes, because he would have known that the advances had been all on my side, and consequently his honour free. But I would not have been his on such terms, for I loved him so truly that I was

greedy of his respect; and *now*, though I am sure he blames me as indecorous, and as a woman of ill-regulated mind, I have the consolation of knowing that he thinks me a woman of virtue."

"Yes—poor men are often sad dupes," replied Melvyn with a sneer. "But how I hate this Shirley!"

"And how I hate his wife! nay, him too sometimes. And I am told they are so happy! so attached! O! I could destroy them both!"

"The destruction of the husband alone would satisfy me, or rather the destruction of his happiness."

"Nay, even your vanity, surely, cannot expect to corrupt Lady Shirley?"

"No—At least the prospect is very remote; but if I can make her lord believe that I have seduced her, I shall be quite satisfied."

"And can you do this?"

"Yes, I think I can. I have discovered she has a secret, which is, for some reason or other, unknown to the earl, and is to remain so—by this means she is, in a degree, in my power."

"Indeed! Poor creature! Then I am sure you will have no *mercy* on her. But how can this saint have secrets which she dare not tell her husband?"

"That I can't comprehend; for an unworthy secret it *cannot* be, as I believe her to be purity *itself*."

"Not the more for being a professed *saint*, I suppose?"

"Indeed I *do*, for being such a saint as she is, for a professed saint she is not. You use the term in speaking of her as one of reproach and distrust, I perceive?"

"And do not you? has she converted you, and taught you to believe in the mummery which you have so often laughed at?"

"Listen, my pretty *esprit fort;* you are a female philosopher, and it is natural enough that men should flatter female philosophers who have bright eyes, on the noble independence of their way of thinking, and admire the strength of their minds for having thrown off the shackles of vulgar prejudice. But do you believe that the men who say this would marry a woman so thinking, and so talking? Do you not believe that they would be horror-struck to know their wife, their sister, or their daughter, had thrown off her belief in religion, and had thereby deprived herself of the only sure guardian of her morals and respectability? No, we all of us know better; and there is a something in a truly and unaffectedly pious woman, that the most abandoned libertine beholds with love and reverence."

"Reverence, perhaps, but not *love;* and, for my part, I wonder what you can see in Lady Shirley—though handsome, she is certainly not attractive."

"Attractive! No—not if you mean that meretricious attraction which aims not at the heart; but she is to me, and I doubt not to other men, rendered more alluring by her consummate purity, and her heavenly-mindedness. It were such a glorious triumph to be loved by such a creature, and to dispute her affections with the Great Being whom she is not ashamed to adore. But the generality of your sex are fools; you don't know your own interests; if you did, you would feel that the strongest and surest charm to captivate even the most profligate of our sex, must be the greatest contrast you can make yourselves in mind, manners, and appearance, to the poor wretched beings who live by the wages of iniquity. We come not into the society of virtuous women, to meet the allurements or gaze on the dress of a courtesan! Poor, lovely, fascinating, but mistaken girl! what have thy philosophy and thy seductions done for thee? Could they captivate for thee the only man thou hast ever loved?"

"Peace! monster, peace!" cried Sophia, almost choked with passion. "I loathe, I abhor you. Quit my sight this instant! Out of my house, or I will ring for my footman to turn you out!"

"You *dare* not, my sweet soul!" returned Melvyn with a malignant smile. "You forget you too are in my power—and I never show *mercy*, you know. But come, I'll soothe thee again, my love, by promising you revenge on this sweet saint, Shirley."

"Will you? can you do this? If so, I will forgive you any thing."

"Then will you assist me?"

"Yes; to the best of my ability."

"And you see Shirley sometimes?"

"Oh, yes, he makes a point of being very civil to me; and so does his lady, with whom he delicately thought, no doubt, it would be well for me to seem on good terms; and I also see that he has great confidence in what I say and think."

"Indeed! I always thought him a weak man."

"Thank ye! But you may say any thing, provided you disunite this now happy couple."

"Well, we will speak further." And thus they separated.

But to return to the contemplation of more pleasing characters.

The fourth of June again arrived, and beheld Catherine a blooming bride at St. James's. That day as she returned, she had certainly no seizures, as Lord Shirley called them; though it is certain that she cast a timid eye on the crowd as she walked along the covered way to her carriage, and her lord followed the direction of her eyes whithersoever they moved. But to return to Lucy Merle.

When Lucy took up her abode with Catherine, she assured her noble host and hostess, that it was her earnest desire to be allowed to retire to bed when they went to evening par-

ties, as it was by no means her wish to move in those circles which her situation in life gave her no right to enter, and where she could only be as an appendage to her friend.

"Ah, Lucy!" said Catherine, "I see how it is; your republican pride makes you disdain to go anywhere as an appendage only."

"Not so," replied Lucy blushing; "though generally speaking, I am desirous of being a noun substantive, yet to you I should always be proud of being merely a noun adjective, and could always say—

——'Let my little bark attendant sail,
Enjoy your triumph, and partake the gale.'"

"I do not doubt you," observed Lord Shirley kindly; "but believe me, I know enough of fashionable life to be certain that if you are launched on its buoyant tide, only as a little attendant bark, you will soon become a vessel of gallant trim, and sail along surrounded by attendant barks yourself."

"Impossible!" cried Lucy; "you must be joking. What! such a nobody as I. What! that young person, as Mrs. Baynton used to call me; can she expect to be ever looked at in the beau monde?"

"Do you think that eyes and taste are confined to the *tiers état?* O fy! this is the severest censure on the privileged orders that you have ever passed."

"I thank you for such encouraging flattery, my lord; but even now I am incredulous, and must beg always to stay at home."

"Not always;—to be sure you will accompany me to the duchess of C——'s concert?" said Catherine.

Before Lucy could reply, the duchess was announced; and Lucy being the first person whom she saw when she entered, she immediately accosted her, saying that the visit was to her, and she had brought with her a card for her concert.

"It is all in vain, duchess," said Lord Shirley; "our fair friend here thinks we patricians have no taste, and that if she shines in our sphere, our vision is so dim we shall not be able to distinguish her. What say you?—has she any chance do you think of being welcome amongst us as any thing but the appendage of Lady Shirley?"

"Nay, do not blush, Miss Merle," cried the duchess laughing, "though I must own no one blushes more becomingly. I can understand and respect your modesty; but trust me, and I am no flatterer, though at first you may be invited and regarded and admired for Lady Shirley's sake, you must soon be so exclusively for your own."

"Shirley told her so," said Catherine, "but she would not believe him."

"Well, let her make the trial; and let her debût be at my house."

"Agreed," replied Lucy; "and could I but hope that all peers and peeresses were like the present, I should be thankful indeed for an introduction into circles in which such beings are to be found."

"No, my dear, no; we do not tell you to expect," answered the duchess, "many such charming creatures as we are; we flatter ourselves we are unique in our way; but we *do* tell you that you will find us better than you expect." And Lucy, pleased and encouraged, allowed Catherine to give her a dress for the approaching assembly. At length the evening came; and Lucy having in vain summoned up all her democratic contempt of titles and rank, entered the crowded rooms of the duchess with a beating heart. "They are only men and women like myself," thought Lucy, "frail, perishable beings; and why should I mind them?" Still she *did* mind them, and Lady Shirley felt the arm on which she leaned tremble with emotion.

The duchess, always herself, polite from benevolence of heart as well as polish of manners, received her fluttered guests with marked kindness; and when she pointed out an advantageous seat for hearing to Lady Shirley, she desired Lucy to take the one beside her.

During the performance which followed, Lucy had time to recover herself; and she became soon regardless of the inquiring eyes turned on her, and the whispers of "Who is she?" with the answer of "A relation of Lady Shirley's by her mother's side," in observing the groups of men and women; amongst whom was Melvyn, who came near them evidently to gaze at and admire the young and beautiful countess.

Lucy was delighted; and certainly forgot that her little bark was entirely overlooked by the side of this gallant vessel.

Lady Shirley, ever considerate, would not leave Lucy when the first act was over, but kept her place, and kindly named to her companion those who passed or accosted her, celebrated for talents, or who were of a distinguished rank in society.

The concert finished at rather an early hour, as the professional performers and singers were going to another party at the P— of W—'s, and a great deal of the company also; and when the former were all gone and the rooms were half empty, the duchess came up to Catherine with clasped hands and declarations how much she would oblige the company if she would sing only one song,—adding an entreaty to the earl that he would join his solicitations to hers.

"Nay, duchess, that I dare not do," he replied; "you know Lady Shirley's dislike to any sort of display; but to oblige me she has consented to have an amateur musical party a month hence, and at her own house she has promised to sing; therefore as she has been so obliging, I do not like to ask her to do what

she disapproves—namely, sing at the house of another."

"My dear lord," cried Catherine smiling, "I will not be obliging by halves; and if you wish me to sing here, I will sing directly." And Lord Shirley agreeably surprised, took her hand and led her to the instrument more like a lover than a husband, while Lucy stole unobserved into a seat behind one of the folding doors, trembling, lest her friend or the earl should ask her to sing also.

Melvyn, meanwhile, had not been unmindful of his deeply-laid scheme. Such had been the coldness with which Lord Shirley had lately treated him, that, much as he wished it, he could not leave his card at the earl's house on his marriage; and as Catherine disapproved the manner in which Lord Shirley looked at Melvyn this evening, she made a point of being very courteous to him; while he, observing that whenever they spoke to each other some curious eyes were fixed on them, contrived to look mysterious whenever Lady Shirley addressed him, and always affected to whisper when he answered her, sighing at the same time in a very significant manner. And now he took care while Catherine was singing, to look at her with the most marked and tender admiration.

Though very modest, Catherine was not at all shame-faced; or rather she was so truly indifferent to the applause of others, that her vanity was not interested in the question whether she should perform excessively well or fall beneath herself. Consequently she felt not that fear, so much more akin (I know from experience) to vanity than to timidity, which usually prevents amateur performers from doing themselves justice; and, except when occasionally distressed by the consciousness of having so many eyes fixed on her, she never sung better, and the company were in raptures. But Catherine sought only the approving eye of her lord; and finding that fixed on her with delighted tenderness, she cheerfully resumed her seat at the instrument when her song was ended, and even allowed the duchess to send for her lute and guitar.

Melvyn in the meanwhile was going about the rooms, saying, with a meaning nod and mysterious smile, "This is not new to me.—In the happy hours we passed at Hampton, Catherine Shirley used to sing to me for hours. Now, alas! she is a *countess!*—would *I* had been an earl!"

When Catherine's lute arrived, she was easily prevailed upon to sing a little English ballad, and to accompany it on that instrument. And Melvyn assured every one near him, that that was his favourite song at Hampton; and the words happened to be such as to be easily applied, by those who chose it, to the idea which prevailed,—that Catherine had married Lord Shirley from pride, though *love* urged her to marry Melvyn. And this little circumstance the arch deceiver resolved to turn to account. He therefore took an opportunity of saying in a low voice to Catherine, though overheard by others, "I thank you for singing that song—it has done me good, though it reminds me of past happy times;" while Catherine, conscious to what he alluded, blushed deeply, and raising her eyes saw Lord Shirley anxiously observing them. Nor was the confusion of one party, the anger of the other, and the lover-like look of Melvyn, lost on any one present; and various were the conjectures to which they gave rise. Had it not been for this circumstance, Lord Shirley would have felt unmixed delight from this first exhibition in fashionable life of his lady's powers. But Melvin's whisper and Catherine's blush kept possession of his imagination, and a coldness of manner which chilled the feelings of Catherine was visible even amidst the praises and thanks he bestowed on her for her performance.

As soon as Catherine had sung the songs which her own and her lord's taste pointed out, she whispered the earl, who immediately went to seek Lucy in her lonely seat, and requested her in Lady Shirley's name to sing a duet with her,—a request which the duchess herself, on a first visit especially, was too delicate to make; and to which Lucy very reluctantly acceded. However, when, handed by Lord Shirley, she had gotten through the arduous task of walking across the room, much of her fear vanished; and her wish to do justice to her beloved instructress conquered all unworthy timidity.

The duet, a difficult Italian one of Mozart's, "*Ah! guarda sorella,*" was therefore admirably sung, and consequently as loudly applauded. And Lucy could not refuse to sing a favourite song also of Lord Shirley's, accompanied by Catherine. She even sung a ballad without music, and was said to resemble Mrs. Jordan both in voice and manner.

"There, you see," whispered Lord Shirley, "I was right, and *vous avez parfaitement réussi.* Can you then bear to go away so soon, and leave the little court you have gathered around you? for I see Catherine looks fatigued."

Lucy only answered by a look of kind reproach; and taking Lady Shirley's hand, expressed her eager wish to go away directly. Accordingly they left the rooms; but not before three or four ladies had desired to be presented to Miss Merle.

"So," said Lucy, when they were in the carriage, "the nobody is really become somebody. Who should have thought it! Oh, my dear principles! I fear you are in a bad way."

The earl, though rather disturbed in mind, continued to rally Lucy on her triumph of the evening; till Catherine becoming rather faint, his attention and that of Lucy was wholly en-

grossed by her during the remainder of the drive.

The next morning, the ladies called who had desired to be presented to Lucy the preceding evening, and left cards for her.

"This is really very polite," said Lucy, pleased almost in spite of herself, at this mark of attention from some of the great world; "but it is meant no doubt as a mark of respect to you, Lady Shirley."

"If so," replied Catherine, "it is the most agreeable one that can be paid me."

"Oh, you poor novices!" cried Lord Shirley, laughing, "and so you cannot, Catherine, guess the cause of this attention, which I predicted would be paid to our fair companion?"

"No, not if it has any other motive than a sense of her merit, and a generous wish to give proofs of their conviction of it."

"Her merit certainly is the original cause; but the truth is, these ladies are party-giving ladies, and as Miss Merle has sung for the duchess of C——, they humbly hope she will have the goodness to help to entertain their company also."

"They are much mistaken then," cried Lucy; "I only sing for those I respect. I honour the duchess of C——, but my voice and I are not at the command of any one."

"Now," said Lord Shirley, "now pray remark and admire my strict integrity; for not even the wish to win you over to the cause of aristocracy could prevent my showing you the *dessous des cartes*, and convincing you that this urbane attention was in the end nothing more than selfishness. Now, dear Miss Merle, forewarned, forearmed, and take care (to use a common phrase) how you say *A*; for if you say *A*, depend upon it you must say *B*."

"Many thanks to you," said Lucy; "for now I feel my principles are quite safe again, and I shall have no difficulty in resisting the civility of which I know the interested motives."

"*Ne gagez pas*," said Lord Shirley. "And here comes one," added he, on hearing Mrs. Somerley announced, "who will put your firmness to some test. I expected her in person this morning; as I assure you, Miss Merle, I overheard her last night loudly prefer your voice and style of singing to Lady Shirley's."

"Impossible!" cried Lucy.

"Oh no, very true and very natural, as she thinks it possible *you* may sing for her, but Lady Shirley, she knows, never can. Yes, I do assure you I heard her say, 'It is evident she has been better taught, and must have had the best master;' and when the lady to whom she spoke asked who you were, she accounted for your being so highly accomplished, by supposing you were educated for a governess. But here she is."

The honourable Mrs. Somerley was the only child of a Mr. Nobbs, who made a large and rapid fortune in trade; and as ambition was as powerful a passion in his breast as the love of money, he resolved that Nancy Nobbs, his daughter, should marry no one but a man of rank and family. It is a maxim universally admitted to be true, that unlimited power is dangerous to the virtue and integrity of monarchs; and I believe it to be not less so to individuals in humbler life. To be born to the possession of great wealth, as wealth is always power, is often as pernicious in its effects on the character of its possessor, as sovereign sway is on that of a king; and the consciousness of wealth does certainly not give such graceful dignity to the manner as the consciousness of royal authority.

On the contrary, to be purse-proud is to be every thing that is offensive to the taste and feelings; and Nancy Nobbs was certainly even from childhood purse-proud. No graceful regard for the feelings of others ever restrained her from saying things mortifying to their self-love. Conscious of independence, she uttered all she thought, because she was restrained by no fear of consequences, as she usually moved in a circle over which her riches gave her absolute sway; and even when her money procured for her a very agreeable husband in the eldest son of a baron, and made her a peeress in prospect, the new sphere in which she now lived could not conquer the habitual insolence of her nature, and she was distinguished by what I think may with propriety be denominated *rich manners*.

Still, conscious of want of birth in herself, she endeavoured to make her original situation forgotten by constant association only with persons of her present rank in life, especially when her husband died before his father, and her hope of shining as a peeress vanished; and there was no effort she thought too laborious, to make her house the resort of all that was great, fashionable, and courted in the world of high life; and she, before whom dependants trembled, and from whom equals withdrew with fear and disgust, was the ready flatterer of the great and the distinguished, in order to induce them by their presence and their talents to give attraction to her assemblies and distinction to her concerts. To do her justice, her reputation was unblemished, and she was herself a chaste woman and a faithful wife, though her moral sense was not strong enough to lead her to run counter to the stream of fashion and custom, and avoid intimacy with women of less unblemished fame.

Such was the woman who now entered Lady Shirley's room, in order to pay her compliments to Lucy, as that young lady had exhibited the preceding evening such musical powers as must make her a most desirable acquisition to a lady of party-giving notoriety; as professors, however superior, might be heard in public; but a private performer could

only be heard by favour, and in a select circle. But Mrs. Somerley did not want shrewdness; she therefore resolved not to disclose her hopes and wishes on this first visit, but endeavour to find out whether Lucy really was going out as a governess, and whether in that case she might not be able to engage her gratitude by offering to procure her a situation.

"Good morning, my lord;—dear Lady Shirley, I hope you did not suffer from the hot rooms last night. But no—blooming as ever; —And Miss Merle too—I need not ask how you do; such brilliancy of complexion—really you put my poor rouge to the blush. Why do you look saucy, Lord Shirley? I suppose you think it is red enough without blushing—but you know I do not mind you."

"Pray sit down," said Lord Shirley.

"Oh, I am not come to stop; I am only come to pay my compliments to that young lady—unless I can prevail on you, Lady Shirley and Miss Merle, to accompany me into the Drive; and in that case I will wait till you are equipped."

"I can't attend you," said Catherine, "as I have business to do at home; but I really wish my friend to accompany you."

"Me! Oh, no—by no means; I had rather not."

"Remember," replied Catherine, "that you never yet have been up and down the Drive."

"No! not on a Sunday?"

"Neither Miss Merle nor I go in the Park on a Sunday."

"True, true—I had forgotten," said Mrs. Somerley with a sarcastic smile. "Do then, my dear Miss Merle, let me have the pleasure of introducing you into the monotonous but fashionable enjoyment of the morning. It will give me too an opportunity of making an acquaintance of which I have taste enough to be desirous."

"You had better accept Mrs. Somerley's offer, Miss Merle," said Lord Shirley, looking significantly at Lucy; "you may never have such an opportunity again." For, knowing Lucy and her *chaperone* equally well, he thought it very probable the former might make some observations likely to render her no longer agreeable to the latter. And Lucy, feeling that she could not again refuse without incivility, told Mrs. Somerley she would detain her only while she got her hat and shawl.

"O dear! to be sure you are not going to pull off that pretty cap?" exclaimed Mrs. Somerley. "I never saw any thing so becoming, —and quite the thing for the Drive."

"Then I will only get my shawl, madam."

"Dear me! I believe it is very rude to admire what any one wears; but really I cannot help admiring this cap—May I ask where you bought it?"

"Oh, madam, I am my own milliner."

"Ay, that's right; if one wishes to have a thing well made, one must make it oneself. But I am too stupid, and have no taste of my own, though I can admire it in others."

"But it is not from taste but necessity that I am my own milliner," replied Lucy, smiling; "and my poverty but not my *will* consents."

"Oh, you are an economist you mean,—and so ought every one to be."

"No, madam, I mean what I say, that I am *poor*; for I am not ashamed of my poverty."

"I dare say not; that is greatness of mind," observed Mrs. Somerley, resolved to praise Lucy *coute qui coute*.

At this moment Catherine, seeing by Lucy's rising colour, which was not rendered paler by Lord Shirley's arch look, that she was on the point of uttering some indignant rejection of this compliment, advised her friend to go for her shawl, and not keep Mrs. Somerley, who had said she was in a hurry. Lucy took the hint, and obeyed.

"What a beautiful young creature that is!" cried Mrs. Somerley, when Lucy was gone. "And such a voice! such taste! such execution! Really to hear you and her together, Lady Shirley, was quite being in Elysium!"

"I am glad you were pleased," said Lady Shirley. "And my friend Lucy deserves all you can say in praise of her beauty and her singing. But I assure you her virtues and her other talents are equal to what you are acquainted with; and the idea of her quitting England is a real grief to me."

"Quitting England!" cried Mrs. Somerley, her countenance changing, much to the amusement of Lord Shirley, who was apparently reading the newspaper, but was looking over it at Mrs. Somerley. "Dear me! I thought she was seeking a situation as a governess somewhere?"

"Oh no; Miss Merle has an independent fortune, and she only leaves me to go to America to her father and mother." Mrs. Somerley, on hearing this, repented of having asked her to be her companion to the Drive. But, recollecting herself, she said, "Pray, how soon does she go?"

"Oh! not for a month or more," replied Lady Shirley. Therefore, as Mrs. Somerley's grand party was to take place before that time, she resumed her design on poor Lucy, and with it her smile. Lucy at this moment returned, and Mrs. Somerley took her leave, followed by her reluctant associate.

When they were gone, Lady Shirley said, "Surely, my dear lord, you were uncandid in imputing Mrs. Somerley's visit to Lucy to interested motives; you see she never alluded to any projected party; and I believe that her attention proceeds from the real *fancy* (as people say) which she has taken to Lucy."

"My dear, candid, consistent Catherine," replied the earl, "as I know you love to think well of every one, I will not contradict you,

but leave it to time and Lucy to inform you whether I am right or not. However, I am glad you said what you did concerning Lucy's fortune, though I am much afraid that, if Mrs. Somerley alludes to her independent property, Lucy will think she is laughing at her, and again talk of her poverty."

The truth was, Lord Shirley and the General had together settled a very considerable sum of money on Lucy, of which she was to know nothing till she was on board ship, lest the pride and independence of her spirit should make her refuse it. But all the money was to be given her in the General's name, and as a return for the protection afforded Catherine by Mrs. Merle, and the attentive affection which Lucy had always displayed towards her.

As soon as Mrs. Somerley and Lucy were seated in the carriage, the former desired to be driven to Lord X——'s, as she wished to call on Lady X——; and Mrs. Somerley added, turning to Lucy, "Now, my dear, you shall see the most beautiful and fascinating of women."

"What! is she more beautiful and fascinating than Lady Shirley?"

"As beautiful, and far more seducing, though many years older than Lady Shirley." And till they stopped at Lady X——'s door, Mrs. Somerley talked of nothing but the magic powers of the charming viscountess.

Lady X—— was indeed charming; but had Lord Shirley suspected that Mrs. Somerley would have taken Lucy to her house, he would not have allowed a young person under his protection to have accompanied her. Though used to behold beauty in its perfection in Catherine, and also accustomed to see a more than common share of it in her looking-glass, Lucy could not behold Lady X—— without admiration. True, she was no longer young,—true, that her bloom was artificial; but there was a brilliancy of eye, a play of countenance, a gracefulness of person and manner, and a charm of voice, that fully entitled her to the epithet of a fascinating, seducing woman. It was something that Lucy had never seen before; and she was not quite sure that she approved, though she admired it; it was too soft, too insinuating; it was the same manner in a woman, which she had always distrusted in Melvyn; and even the winning kindness with which Lady X—— accosted her, though it flattered her self-love, failed to excite her confidence.

"Is this Miss Merle?" said Lady X——, "this the young lady whose vocal powers charmed every one last night, even though Lady Shirley sung? How much obliged I am to you, dear Mrs. Somerley, for bringing her hither, as I was so unfortunate as neither to see nor hear her. But I find the charm was not in voice only; the eye and the ear were both gratified, which is not often the case."

"I suppose, if Lord Shirley be right," thought Lucy, "that she also is going to give a party soon. Oh! the meanness of the great!" And with almost repulsive coldness did she reply, "Your ladyship is too obliging."

But Lady X—— did not observe her manner; she was so sure that an obscure miss must be delighted and flattered by her praise, that a smile played as usual on her beautiful lips, and both ladies in turn addressed direct and oblique flatteries to Lucy.

The viscountess then talked of Lady Shirley in high terms, in which Lucy as warmly joined. She spoke in the same terms of Lord Shirley. But Mrs. Somerley declared he was in her opinion an overrated man, and neither in beauty, manners, talents, nor virtues, was he worthy, she thought, of the high reputation which he had gained.

"Then I am sure you do not know him, madam," cried Lucy, her face on fire at this attack on a man whom she justly considered as an example to his fellows; "for those who do know him must think him the noblest of his sex."

The women of the world looked archly and oddly at Lucy as she spoke, and then significantly at each other; while the eyes of Mrs. Somerley twinkled with numberless meanings. "You speak warmly, Miss Merle," said she.

"I feel warmly, madam."

"I do not doubt it," observed Lady X——, with a look which Lucy did not like, but could not understand.

It was impossible for a pure-minded girl like Lucy Merle to imagine for one moment that the honest praise which she had given to the worth which she admired, could have been construed by any one who heard it into an improper attachment to the husband of her friend.

"I think, Miss Merle, you are going to America, soon?" observed Mrs. Somerley, with a leering look at Lady X——. "And Lady Shirley declares herself to be so sorry to part with you!"

"Very sorry, I dare say," cried the viscountess, returning the look of Mrs. Somerley.

"I dare say she *is* very sorry," replied Lucy, not liking the tones of either speaker, because they seemed to convey doubts of Lady Shirley's veracity. "Lady Shirley never says any thing she does not mean."

"Then she is a very extraordinary woman," said Lady X——.

"She is an extraordinary woman," answered Lucy; "a very superior, a very uncommon woman. Indeed I believe she has not her equal on earth."

"Nor in heaven either, you think, I suppose," said Mrs. Somerley with an irreverent laugh that shocked Lucy.

"I presume not, madam," she replied, "to speculate on subjects so sacred; it is sufficient for me to know that Lady Shirley's conduct on earth is such as to prepare her for heaven."

"Well, child," said Mrs. Somerley, with her usual insolence, "you are monstrous handsome, and I dare say very clever; but you are a great quiz in some things, though you make very pretty caps and sing very pretty songs."

Lucy smiled good-humouredly in return, for she liked her rudeness better than her flatteries; and as the ladies began to converse with each other on the faults and follies of their mutual friends and acquaintance, Lucy opened a folio book of prints which lay on the table, and amused herself with looking over its contents. But her attention, spite of herself, was arrested by some of the conversation that was going forward; and often Lucy doubted whether it was possible that she could hear aright; but a few minutes convinced her that she heard only too perfectly.

"Do you visit Mrs. Benson now?" asked Mrs. Somerley.

"Yes, from habit, not love; for she and her husband are both very dull, and their only recommendation is that they have a good cook."

"Yes, she is dull indeed, though it was thought her little affair with *you know who* enlivened her. But perhaps that was all scandal."

"Scandal, do you call it?" replied lady X——. "Dear me! I think the report creditable to her; I liked her all the better for being the mistress of a certain charming duke."

At this shameless avowal of profligacy, this daring confession that she admired a woman the more for being an adulteress, Lucy rose indignantly from her seat, and desired leave to sit in another room till Mrs. Somerley was ready to go,—on whose countenance, though she meanly seemed to assent by a smile to the observation of her noble friend, the quick eye of Lucy read disapprobation of the sentiment.

"To be sure, you may go if you choose it," said the viscountess. "But wherefore? are you ill? What has happened?"

"My illness, madam," replied Lucy, "is of the mind, not of the body. I *dare* not stay; you are so beautiful and so fascinating, that I dare not expose myself to the danger of having my principles corrupted, by listening to the praises of adultery from a being so calculated to make the *wrong* appear the *better* cause."

"Monstrous assurance!" cried Mrs. Somerley.

"Really," cried the viscountess, whose self-love had been nearly as much gratified by Lucy's praise as piqued by her severity, "you are at perfect liberty to go; and I advise a precipitate retreat to your carriage, as even my house may have an improper influence on your sanctity; and when there, you may, you know, till Mrs. Somerley comes, indulge your imagination in contemplating the *excelling charms* of your *friend's husband;* therefore Miss—Miss . . . . what is your name, I beg you to vanish directly."

Though little inclined to laugh, as her sense of rectitude had been deeply wounded, Lucy, who had a quick sense of the ridiculous, could not restrain her propensity to laughter, when she found the flattered and delightful Miss Merle of the preceding half-hour converted into a Miss—what is your name; and while she laughed, her countenance wore an expression of satire and a power of ridicule which alarmed Lady X——; for though she was proof against grave and moral rebuke, she shrunk from ridicule; and having heard that Lucy was a young person of great talents, her fears converted her into an author and a wit, and she saw herself by anticipation the subject of an epigram or a lampoon.

Accordingly she followed Lucy to the door; and politely expressing her sorrow that any thing which she had uttered in the foolish levity of her heart should have shocked Miss Merle, whose principles she honoured, and whose ingenuousness she respected, she hoped to have the honour of her company at a small party and a *petit souper* on the following Thursday.

Her countenance had now assumed its sweetest and most winning expression; and Lucy, spite of her rigid integrity, felt almost reluctant to assure her, that in the house and in the presence of such an enchantress she never willingly would trust herself again. She then ran hastily down stairs and jumped into the carriage, almost astonished at her own daring, yet rich in the approving feelings of her heart and conscience.

But Lucy would have felt it difficult for even their approbation to have supported her spirits, had she known that Lady X—— believed her to be a consummate hypocrite, and that Mrs. Somerley agreed to what Lady X—— advanced, though she did not in her heart believe it to be true; since the viscountess declared that she was herself convinced, and she would tell every one, that Lucy Merle was the mistress of Lord Shirley, whose well-known pride, she said, was such, that he would not have let his lady associate with a low-born girl unless he had had his private reasons for it.

So impossible is it for the consciously vicious to believe in the existence of virtue, so certain it is that the only women who are candid in their judgments of other women and slow to admit suspicions to their disadvantage, are those whose own minds are unconscious of impure propensities, and whose experience teaches them that situations of *danger* are not necessarily *improved* opportunities of *vice*.

Mrs. Somerley assured Lady X—— that when she rejoined Lucy she would give her a fine dressing (for such was her vulgar expression.) But her courage failed her when she saw the culprit, who awaited her with a calm

determined countenance, and was prepared rather for attack than for defence.

"So, Miss Merle," said Mrs. Somerley, averting her eyes from the fixed and penetrating glance of Lucy; "this is the return you make me for my civility in taking you out with me,—you think proper to affront my friends—and a woman of high rank too!"

"I have no respect for rank, madam, unaccompanied by virtue; and *you* affronted me in the *first* instance by taking me to the house of an unprincipled woman, and she affronted me in the next by talking in a manner offensive to good morals."

"Mighty fine! What, then, do you not think Lady X—— fit company for you?"

"No, madam; and I am sure Lord and Lady Shirley would be of the same opinion."

"Lady Shirley might, because she is a saint and a prude; but I should suppose Lord Shirley more indulgent to such little peccadilloes."

"Little peccadilloes! Oh, madam! though the rank and the fashion of Lady X—— might induce you to veil your own better feelings before her, do not continue a disingenuousness so unjust to your real nature. I know you are yourself a woman of correct conduct, or Lord and Lady Shirley would not have allowed me to go out with you."

"Very condescending indeed!" said Mrs. Somerley; though she was gratified by the just discrimination of Lucy.

"I am no flatterer," continued Lucy; "and though you had the weakness to assent by smiling silence to what that unhappy lady uttered, I saw on your countenance an expression of virtuous disapprobation."

"Child, I believe you are a witch," replied the pleased yet mortified Mrs. Somerley. "But you have no right to conclude Lady X—— otherwise than a virtuous woman in conduct, though in conversation she be *un peu libre*."

"Pray, madam," said Lucy, "does Lady Shirley visit Lady X——?"

"No, I believe she does not."

"But did Lady X—— call on her on her marriage?"

"I, I—yes—I dare say she did."

"Then, madam, I am answered."

"But whither is the stupid man going?" cried Mrs. Somerley, pulling the check-string.

"To Lord Shirley's—to Grosvenor-square, whither I desired him to go before you left Lady X——."

"What! will you not go into the Drive with me, according to our original engagement?"

"Our original engagement is void, madam, as you departed from it in taking me to call on Lady X——, and I had now much rather go home, having seen quite enough of fashionable society for one day."

"As you please," returned Mrs. Somerley, biting her lip. But recovering herself, as she did not like to give up all hope of benefiting by Lucy's musical talents, she tried to soothe her ruffled plumes by administering to her that ample dose of flattery which, with less powerful minds, had so often succeeded. And after praising Lucy's fine voice, taste, and execution, she assured her that every one said she sung much better than Lady Shirley, and had evidently been *better taught*.

Lucy smiled, and said, "her instructer was indeed first-rate."

After a few more compliments, Mrs. Somerley said she was going to have a small select party in a few days, and should be happy indeed if Miss Merle would do her the honour of coming to it, and oblige her so far as to sing during the course of the evening.

"I am so unused to sing without my *mistress*," said Lucy, "that I cannot answer for being able to sing without her."

"Your mistress! Dear me! who is she? and where does she live? Perhaps she would come too!—Cannot we drive to her house now, and ask her?"

"If you choose; but I am sure it would be in vain."

"What! could not money nor flattery prevail on her? or the promise of patronage?—there is nothing I would not do, no trouble I would not take, to get her and you to my party."

"I believe you," replied Lucy; "but my mistress does not want either money or patronage, and to flattery she is superior,"

"*You* may believe that, but I do not. But tell me, who is this *rara avis?*"

"My mistress, and the only mistress I ever had in any branch of art, is Lady Shirley."

Mrs. Somerley bit her lip again, and was too much provoked, too mortified, to reply.—At this moment the carriage stopped at Lord Shirley's, and with a cold bow and "Good morning" on either side, the new acquaintance parted, to meet as Lucy hoped no more.

Lord and Lady Shirley were only just returned from a walk in the Square, and were surprised to see Lucy come back at an hour when the most fashionable were only just entering the Park. But they both commended Lucy for returning as she did, having had such cause to be offended with her companion; while even the candid Catherine could not help owning, that Mrs. Somerley was not worthy the confidence they had reposed in her, and that her civility to Lucy was not as disinterested as she at first thought it.

Lord Shirley, more displeased than Catherine, because better acquainted with the real character of the viscountess, resolved to call on Mrs. Somerley, and reproach her with her conduct. Accordingly he went to her house at the usual hour of returning from the Park, and expressed his displeasure so strongly, that Mrs. Somerley was provoked to tell him what

Lady X—— suspected of his intimacy with Lucy; and promised him that if he would let her sing for Lady X—— and herself, she would prevail on the viscountess to forgive Lucy's impertinence, and not mention her suspicions to any one.

It was impossible for Lord Shirley to hear this coarse calumnious information without indignation the most violent; and his just reproaches irritated Mrs. Somerley so much, that in her heart she vowed to take every opportunity of revenge; and she was not long without having the opportunity she desired.

But every design on the vocal powers of Lucy Merle was frustrated by her being summoned to Gravesend; as the person who was to have charge of her on her voyage to America had transacted his business, and the packet on board of which he had engaged their passage was ready to sail for Philadelphia.

It is needless to describe the grief of Lucy at parting with Lady Shirley, who with her lord accompanied her to Gravesend. Nor did Lucy feel much less sorrow at bidding adieu to the earl, whose conduct to her had been consistently kind and generous, and whose attention, perhaps, she valued the more because it was unexpected. At length the signal was given; and Lucy, too wretched to speak her adieu, gazed her last in silence on the friend so dear to her heart. Lady Shirley also felt considerable pain at the separation; but then she had a comforter still more dear than Lucy to support her under the trial; and a friend, however dear, cannot be—I had almost said, ought not to be—so dear to the wife as she was to the single woman.

A husband, if he fulfils the duties of that sacred relation, is the best friend of his wife, and she requires no other confidant; and if he does not fulfil them, it is better for a woman to be without the temptation to violate one of the most sacred of her duties, by having it in her power to complain of her husband's infirmities to a female friend.

CHAPTER XX.

I HAVE before said that Mrs. Somerley was so irritated by Lord Shirley's severe observations when he called to reprove her for having carried Lucy Merle to the house of Lady X——, that she resolved, if possible, to take what she denominated some clever and humorous revenge on him and his sanctified countess; and as she was skilled in the disgraceful art of playing tricks, and taking people in, as it is called, she was not slow to contrive or to execute a scheme against Lady Shirley. Still she had some difficulty in procuring an opportunity, as there was too little congeniality of disposition between them to admit of intimacy; but as Mrs. Somerley had recommended a nurse to Lady Shirley, and the latter wished to put some questions relative to her to the lady whom she had attended in her confinement, Mrs. Somerley offered to attend her thither any morning that she chose; and a day being fixed on for the purpose, Catherine sent word that she should call for Mrs. Somerley in her own carriage.

I have observed that Mrs. Somerley was not at all nice in the choice of her acquaintance, and that, from some singular obliquity of feeling, she had no objection, though not a woman of gallantry herself, to associate with those who were so, if wealth and title were the appendages of infamy, and that the fallen sister could minister in any way to her interest or amusement.

At this time Mrs. Somerley was in the habit of visiting a *divorcée*,—or to speak less affectedly, a divorced wife,—who had been deserted by her lover, but was trying to beguile her sorrows by keeping an elegant house, a good table, and attracting around her such of her own sex as were not too scrupulous to visit her, and those of the other by whom great beauty and pleasing talents were not the less admired because they were united to morals any thing but severe.

Yet there were times when her fall from reputation and this comparative exile from society were felt severely by this frail but lovely being, especially when she heard the charming of her own sex extolled for that virtue which she herself had forfeited. Such praise she had heard with envy and humiliation bestowed on Lady Shirley; and once when alone with Mrs. Somerley, she had with many tears declared that she did not know how to endure the sensation of her own shame when she heard Lady Shirley so extolled, and felt that she was once what Lady Shirley now was; and she ended with expressing a strong but fruitless wish to see this admired woman.

On this conversation, Mrs. Somerley founded her scheme of what she thought witty and humorous revenge on "the proud, oracular, and puritanical earl."

During their drive, which was to a villa some miles from London, Mrs. Somerley contrived to turn the conversation on gallantry and divorces; subjects very disagreeable to Lady Shirley, who thought it more serviceable to contemplate pictures of virtue than pictures of vice. Mrs. Somerley at last ventured to say that she always pitied those poor women so much, whom the villanous acts of men had lured from their place in society, that if they were not very bad she sometimes in private visited them.

"Indeed!" cried Lady Shirley; "that is going rather too far, I think; they are certainly objects of the greatest pity, but surely, it does

not follow that they are to be visited as if they had not erred."

"What! I suppose like the lady who left the box when Lady V—— entered, as the story goes, you think such errors catching."

"By no means," replied Lady Shirley; "still I should have done exactly as that lady did; and I have always considered Lady V—— as having, by the observation imputed to her, only proved her callous effrontery equal to her vices. It seems to me not enough that a woman is consciously virtuous herself, but she must appear to reverence and value virtue in others; and if she is equally kind to the bad and the good, how is she to show that preference for virtue, which, as far as example goes, is of service to the cause of good morals? Besides, one reason why I would not from choice associate with depraved women, is this: I have no sympathy with them; my views of life are different to theirs; nor could I talk with them on the most important and interesting of all subjects. If I talked on morals, I should seem to be insulting their want of them; if on religion, I should feel that they could not like to discourse on those hopes which they had been contented to resign."

"But suppose they were penitent, Lady Shirley—Suppose that to talk on religion, and to hope through penitence to regain the expectations which they had forfeited, were the first delight of their contrite and broken spirit?"

"Why, then, madam, I should exhort them not to wish to return, even if they could, to the world that had properly rejected them; but to fly to solitude, to humble themselves in the spirit of true penitence before the Being whom they had offended, and to seek the knowledge of holy things from the Gospel and its ministers."

"Oh! but there is something in the pity of a woman for a frail sister, that no man can equal. A pious and virtuous woman, speaking comfort, and giving religious support to a penitent sinner, is a sight that angels might joy to look upon; especially if that woman be young and beautiful, and steers safely through the quicksands that have wrecked the peace of the being whom, with angelic benevolence, she is deigning to cheer. Lady Shirley, I am neither young nor beautiful, nor at all versed in the mysteries of religion; but all *I* can do, I *do* do, and am doing at this time for a poor penitent, whose fate has been peculiarly hard, as she has been forsaken by the man for whose sake she left her husband."

"What retributive justice!—But pray, Mrs. Somerley, are you sure which she sorrows for the most—the loss of her honour, or the loss of her lover?"

"Nay, that is uncandid," replied Mrs. Somerley, "for my friend is a real penitent; and I heard her express such bitterness of remorse, and saw her shed so many tears the other day, that you would have wept, as I did, had you been present, especially as you were the cause."

"I the cause!"

"Yes; it was after hearing you extolled for your virtue and piety as well as beauty, that she contrasted herself with you, and wept over the afflicting contrast."

"Poor thing!" cried Lady Shirley. "Well, let her humbly and fervently endeavour, by her life to come, to make her peace with Heaven, and there is no doubt of her succeeding—Let her read her Bible, and there is scarcely a page that does not assure us of pardon and salvation to those who diligently seek them."

"Ah! Lady Shirley, this is very true; and if you, to whom that blessed book is so familiar, would talk thus to my poor friend, you might do her good."

"I, madam—I! Surely the clergyman of the parish would do her much more."

"He! why he is a man of fashion, and she knows his practice too well to be improved by his theory."

"Dreadful perversion of a sacred situation! —But, madam, there are, there must be clergymen who are fitted for an office like this—Lord Shirley's domestic chaplain would visit this poor lady at any time; shall I send him?"

Here Mrs. Somerley could scarcely refrain from laughing aloud at the *bon-hommie* of Lady Shirley, who believed firmly in the pretended penitence of her *protegée*. And so good a joke would it have been if Lord Shirley's severe chaplain had waited on the lady in question, (whom I shall call Lady Vortex,) that she was half tempted to let Lady Shirley send him, by way of *making fun*, of which she was very fond. But on reflection she gave up this idea; and saying Lady Vortex was not enough advanced, she feared, to venture at present on this step, she again urged Lady Shirley to prepare her mind for it by a private visit to her herself.

"To say the truth," added she, "I am going to her after we have called at the shops I mentioned; and if you would accompany me, it would be doing a most generous and even pious action,—for surely to lead a sinner to her God is a pious action,—and you would rejoice in it to the last day of your life."

"You may be right," said Lady Shirley, thoughtfully; "I might have some influence at least, in prevailing on her to consult better directors than myself. Well, I will consider of it."

"O! but there is nothing like the time present; and my poor friend too has such a cough!"

"Indeed! And now I recollect, Lord Shirley has just given a living to a very admirable man, who comes to us this evening; and I know no one so likely to do your friend essen-

tial service.—Perhaps if I see her to-day, I could persuade her to see him to-morrow."

"Very likely," said Mrs. Somerley, shaking with inward laughter at the success of her scheme.

"Well, then, I will accompany you—You think she will be at home?"

"O! she rarely goes out; but I will send a little note to say we are coming."

Accordingly, at the milliner's where they stopped when they returned to town, Mrs. Somerley wrote a note, and despatched it, as she thought, to her friend; though, as it happened, it was taken to the wrong house; for though from habit Mrs. Somerley called this lady Lady Vortex, and wrote to her as such, she was now only Miss Newbury, and that name was on her door; consequently, as Lord Vortex was married again, the servant, who was a new one, carried the note to the bride, Lady Vortex.

The note was as follows:

"My dear Creature,—You wished to see the Shirley, the pretty saint; and I am bringing her to see the pretty sinner; but she comes expecting to see a penitent—a Magdalen—So no rouge, no undress, clothed up to the chin; no *boudoir*—modest parlour; pale cheeks; downcast eyes; prim mouth, and *de grands sentiments; des remords*, and—a receipt to make a Magdalen. I can no more; but be alone—no men. Yours ever,

C. Somerley.

"P. S.—It was hard work to persuade her, but she could not resist the hope of preaching a little. If you have a Bible, let it peep out from under a sofa pillow."

As soon as Lady Shirley had resolved to pay this visit—though she wished she had first consulted her lord on the subject,—she gave loose to the suggestions of her generous and pious nature, and looked forward with delight to the idea of serving and saving an erring but repentant fellow-creature; and by the time they reached Miss Newbury's door, her countenance was so radiant with benevolence, that Mrs. Somerley thought she had never seen her so transcendantly handsome; and she rejoiced that her friend would see the reigning beauty in the greatest possible perfection.

When they alighted, on the servant's saying her lady was at home, Mrs. Somerley led the way into a parlour, saying, "We shall find your lady here, I conclude?"

"O, no, madam; my lady is in the *boudoir*."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, quite sure." And Mrs. Somerley bit her lip with vexation, at finding her orders so ill attended to; while the servant preceded them up stairs.

The parlour into which Mrs. Somerley wanted to introduce Lady Shirley was the only room in the house that did not seem to owe its decoration to the hand of Luxury itself; but the landing-place, and the rooms through which they followed to the *boudoir*, were full of the most odoriferous plants; while from the half-opened door of that beautiful apartment they inhaled the perfume of pastiles which were at that moment sending forth their fragrant clouds from costly incense vases.

Miss Newbury was no longer young; and she called on art in liberal quantities to supply the deficiency of nature. She also availed herself, in this her usual sitting-room, of what the French call *le petit jour*, in order to conceal the absence of youth and heighten the presence of beauty; and to do this still more effectually, the light entered only through rose-coloured blinds and draperies, which threw a becoming tint over every one present.

In this apartment Miss Newbury was reclining on a sofa. A bold-looking woman of a certain age was sitting on a chair at a little distance fondling a parrot, while a puppy-dog was tearing to pieces several unreceipted bills, on the top of which was visible "Per bill delivered." Two youths of rank and fashion were employed, the one in clasping an amber bracelet round the beautiful and very naked arm of Miss Newbury, the other in fastening a sandal which enclosed a very pretty and exposed ankle, and made up the sum of fashionable display which distinguished her whole person; while a man of *ton* reclined at whole length on his back, and on a *chaise lounge* opposite.

At this moment the servant announced Mrs. Somerley and Lady Shirley.

"Who!" cried Miss Newbury; "Lady Shirley!—No, that's a joke of Somerley's."

"And no bad one," said one of the youths. When lo! Mrs. Somerley entered. And even Mrs. Somerley had the grace to blush on entering followed by Lady Shirley.

The round arm remained unbraced, the pretty ankle unsandalled; for the youths involuntarily started up, and Miss Newbury did the same; but the bold-looking woman kept her seat, as regardless of Lady Shirley's presence as the parrot and the puppy-dog. But not so the mistress of the house; she had not yet with her virtue lost her respect for it; and feeling confused and humbled by the presence of one to whose society she had forfeited her claims, she stood embarrassed and motionless, not knowing what to say, and unable even to beg Lady Shirley to be seated; while even Mrs. Somerley was so taken by surprise at seeing so different a scene from what she expected, that she too was silent, and averted her eyes carefully from the inquiring eyes of the men, who seemed to ask by their looks, "Why, in the name of all that's odd, did you bring Lady Shirley hither?"

But the confusion was soon ended. Though Lady Shirley's self-possession was awhile taken from her by surprise, yet it returned as

soon as ever she saw that she had been the dupe of a coarse-minded woman; and recovering with it all the consciousness of her high and unspotted character, she said with great dignity, "There has been some mistake here —This is not the lady I came to visit, and I can have no business here." Then with a graceful bow of the head to the disconcerted Miss Newbury, she suddenly left the room, and running down stairs ordered her carriage to be instantly called.

She had scarcely disappeared, when the two youths, who were well known to Lady Shirley, ran out after her to see her to her carriage, and with a feeling as if they wished to apologize to her for being with Miss Newbury; but this was only a feeling; for what had they to apologize for, and what could it signify to Lady Shirley, whom and where they visited? Still, they felt an irresistible wish to be thought well of by such a woman, and a still stronger wish to know by what chance she came in that house. But they dared not put any questions to her when they joined her in the hall while she waited for her carriage, as there was a dignity in Catherine's manner that checked their freedom. An every-day woman would have told them unasked, and complained of Mrs. Somerley; but Lady Shirley felt that such a communication would be indelicate; and as it must have led her to speak severely of Mrs. Somerley, it was more consistent with her christian forbearance not to speak at all; and she knew that it was not necessary for *her* to justify herself for being seen one instant at Miss Newbury's. As she drove off, Catherine desired the servant to tell Mrs. Somerley she would send the carriage back for her.

When the gentlemen went up stairs again, they found Miss Newbury and Mrs. Somerley in grand debate—Miss Newbury reproaching Mrs. Somerley bitterly for having exposed her to insult by bringing Lady Shirley on false pretences to her house, and also of having, as the world would think, made her a partner in an insult offered to Lady Shirley; while Mrs. Somerley laid all the blame on her not being prepared to receive such a visiter, and wondering what was become of the note. "My servant must have made a mistake; let him be rung for"—and the servant came.

"To whom, you stupid blockhead," cried Mrs. Somerley, "did you carry that note?"

"As directed, madam, to Lady Vortex's."

"You are a fool! get out of my sight directly, and go and get back the note."

"You told me it was for Lady Vortex, and so it was directed."

"No doubt the man is right, for you do direct to me by that odious name," cried Miss Newbury; "and new your delectable note will be sent all over the town, and I shall suffer for what I am entirely ignorant of. And do see how Lord Norberry there is laughing and enjoying my discomfiture."

"Why, who can help it, to see the hoaxer *hoaxed?* for you must own Lady Shirley has it hollow on her side; since even Mrs. Somerley here looked silly, ay, and abashed, though I do not know why. But I suppose she thought it a good joke to get the fair saint here, and brought her on a false pretence; and now it seems the 'note of preparation' was sounded in wrong ears."

"It is good fun, 'faith," cried the other young man; while the indolent gentleman on the sofa declared it was quite a new scene, but he did not comprehend it; and the bold-looking woman said it was a great fuss about nothing. "But, Mrs. Somerley, we told the servant," said Lord Norberry, "that we would deliver Lady Shirley's message, which was that she would send the carriage back for you."

"Well, that part of my fun, however, is not spoiled; for I will keep the carriage some time, and that shall be seen at Miss Newbury's door."

"And if it waited for Lady Shirley, madam," cried Miss Newbury, rising indignantly, "I should be proud of having it seen there. But as it would wait only for a Mrs. Somerley, I will not have it wait a moment; but let it get rid of its fare as soon as it can." Then ringing the bell—"White!" said she to her man, "let us know as soon as ever the carriage returns."

"If this be the case, madam, and this is your gratitude, I shall not wait for the carriage, but walk home," cried Mrs. Somerley; "and it will be long before I trouble you with my presence again; and I deserve this return, for frequenting, out of good-nature, such society as yours."

Before Miss Newbury could reply, Mrs. Somerley's servant came in to say that he had been for the note, and that Lady Vortex sent word she had sent it enclosed to Lady Shirley.

This information startled even Mrs. Somerley, and did not appease the rage of either lady; while the young men, and the lounger, finding all the smiles of Miss Newbury were vanished for that morning, rose to depart, one of them saying to the other, "'I believe there is some mistake; this is not the lady I came to visit; and I can have no business here!' Was not that it? He!"

"Yes, the words; but to do justice to the look and the manner, you must have the beauty and the innocence of Lady Shirley."

"Shall I give you an arm, my funny one?" he added to Mrs. Somerley, in a tone very different from that in which he had mentioned Catherine; and Mrs. Somerley taking his arm begged him to see her home, while she left Miss Newbury to feel and lament with bitter

tears the mortifications to which her frailty had exposed her.

To her lord, and to him only, Catherine related to what her credulity had exposed her; and by candidly blaming herself for taking such a step without his leave, she tried to divert some of his anger from Mrs. Somerley. But that was impossible, especially as the note from Lady Vortex was delivered by mistake to him, and her conduct thereby disclosed in all its odious light.

Immediately, in spite of Catherine's entreaties, he enclosed the note in a cover to Mrs. Somerley, in the inside of which he wrote as follows:—

"Lord and Lady Shirley conclude it is unnecessary to inform Mrs. Somerley that, after what passed this morning, and the perusal of the enclosed, they cannot have the honour to attend Mrs. Somerley's assembly this evening."

This, though an expected, was an unwelcome blow: as Lady Shirley was the lion of the day, and Mrs. Somerley had taken care to hint, in order to attract company, that the fair countess had promised to sing during the course of the evening.

"Well," said she to herself, "war is now, however, declared between us; the sword is drawn, and I will throw away the scabbard. So look to yourself, Lord Shirley; I will tease you well whenever I have an opportunity."

A short time after Lucy Merle's departure, Catherine (who was rendered occasionally indisposed by her situation) drove some miles into the country one morning, in order to breathe fresher air than London afforded; as she returned, the horses took fright, the coachman was thrown off his box, and the unruly animals ran violently forward towards a turnpike gate, which the turnpike-man had the wisdom to close. It so happened that Melvyn, who was walking, saw what was passing; and, recognizing the liveries, ran forward through the gate before it was closed, and seizing the horses appeared to stop them, though in reality they were stopped by the gate. He was, however, really instrumental in preventing the carriage from being overturned, by assisting in holding it up while it was taken off the post over which the horses had drawn it. When he opened the carriage he found Lady Shirley in a state of great alarm, and scarcely able to articulate her thanks to Melvyn for having, as she thought, saved her from destruction.

Melvyn knew that, whatever secret pleasure he felt in having thus seemingly conferred so great an obligation on Lord and Lady Shirley, he must confine the expression of it within proper bounds. He therefore replied almost coldly to Lady Shirley's thanks, while he stayed with her in a shop till the servants returned with Lord Shirley's carriage and horses, as the coachman had not dared to proceed with her own. But when they arrived, he begged to be allowed to see her safe home. This offer she refused; assuring him she was quite well, and that the effects even of her alarm were going off. Melvyn, however, followed the carriage as fast as possible; and as it was stopped near Hyde Park by other carriages, he had time to overtake it entirely, though he kept out of sight; and as the coachman went into the Drive, Melvyn was able to reach Grosvenor-square as soon as Lady Shirley did; and when she stopped at her own door, the first person whom she saw was Melvyn.

Lord Shirley was at this moment entering the square, and with no small surprise beheld Catherine not only handed out of her carriage by Melvyn, but actually leaning on his arm as she walked up the steps, where she seemed to take a most animated and even affectionate leave of him, while he with his hand pressed to his heart seemed to retire in great emotion.

He eagerly therefore hurried home to require an explanation of the scene; and running up into the drawing-room, found Catherine on her knees, and leaning on her clasped hands as they rested on the sofa. She started as he entered, and raising her head displayed a face covered with tears. At this sight, Lord Shirley fancied,—for what cannot jealousy imagine?—that these were tears of regret that she had not married the too insinuating Melvyn, and that she had been endeavouring by prayer to strengthen her heart against him; while hastily advancing, he desired to know, in rather an unkind tone, why she was on her knees, and why she wept.

Surprised and wounded, Catherine rose, and with great effort replied, "I was only weeping out my thanks to my Creator."

"*Thanks!* for what?"

"For my preservation." Here she could sustain herself no longer, but fell back in a fainting-fit on the sofa, while the terrified earl rung and called violently for assistance.

The servants now, all speaking at once, related what had passed, their mistress's danger, and the courage of the gentleman who stopped the horses, and also helped to prevent the carrriage from overturning,—but his name they could not tell; and the earl was a little relieved at not hearing that the gentleman was Melvyn.

At length Catherine recovered; but was so ill that she begged to be carried to bed instantly, and to have her medical attendant sent for. He, when he came, desired she might be kept perfectly quiet for many hours, as he found her whole frame had undergone an alarming agitation. Lord Shirley therefore was forbidden to approach her, and was consequently unable to hear, what indeed he dreaded to hear—namely, that she owed her preservation to his rival. But even this fear was swallowed up in apprehension lest Cathe-

rine's health, if not her life, should be endangered by the accident. But at night she was permitted to sit up and see her lord, who was under no necessity of putting questions to her relative to the accident; for she was eager to relate to Lord Shirley every particular, and to try to make him repent of his past coldness towards Melvyn, by describing his courage in rescuing her from peril, and his modesty in disclaiming all merit in so doing.

"Melvyn! Melvyn! your preserver?" cried the earl with a deep sigh. "Would it had been any one else!"

"Do you think my life, and that probably of your child, dearly purchased at the rate of being preserved by him?"

Lord Shirley started, and felt shocked at this, the first reproach that Catherine had ever uttered; and, clasping her tenderly to his breast, his emotion was for some time the only and the most satisfactory answer he could make to her question.

"I will answer your unkind query, my love," said he at length, "not by words but actions. Compose yourself to sleep now, and to-morrow you shall have reason to *repent* your saucy doubt."

But it was not without great effort, that Lord Shirley could prevail on himself to act towards Melvyn as he would have done towards another man on such an occasion; nor could he put his resolution in practice, till, as soon as he had breakfasted, he had called the servants in, and again heard them declare that they believed their lady owed her life wholly to the brave stranger.

"God for ever bless him and his for it!" added his panegyrist.

"Enough," said Lord Shirley; and rushed out of the house, ashamed of having been forced to have recourse to the gratitude of his servants in order to inflame his own. But the unworthy feeling was over, and the generous heart of Lord Shirley was all itself when he reached the house of Melvyn. As he knocked at the door, it was opened to let out Mr. ——, the surgeon, from whom he learned that Melvyn, in stopping horses who were running away with a carriage, had sprained his arm, and was in violent pain.

"That carriage was mine, and the lady saved, my wife," cried Lord Shirley; "and I am come to thank her deliverer; but I hope he has not sustained any serious injury."

"No—certainly not," was Mr. ——'s answer, as he walked hastily away.

Lord Shirley then sent up his name, and was immediately admitted; while even Melvyn's vindictive heart felt something like emotion at the idea of a visit from Lord Shirley.

The earl as soon as he entered threw himself upon his feelings; and while he held Melvyn's hand in his, was for a few moments unable to speak; while Melvyn felt something of his hate subdued, as he saw the changed and grateful expression of Lord Shirley's countenance, and beheld the glance of forbidding coldness replaced by a look of unutterable benevolence.

At length the earl articulated, "Melvyn! I want words to thank you! Such an obligation as you have conferred on me! You are a noble fellow, and you must let me prove, by my respect and attention, how truly I appreciate you and your daring! Do, pray, come and dine with us to-day! Lady Shirley, if well enough, will be delighted to thank her preserver!"

This was not said all at once, but with breaks occasioned by emotion; and Melvyn affected to feel a great deal too. But too proud and too wary to accept the first invitation to a house that had hitherto been shut against him, he declared himself engaged that day.

"Then come *to-morrow* or the *next* day." But he was still engaged; and Lord Shirley began to fear that he had by his past coldness offended Melvyn beyond forgiveness, and that he would not visit him. But there he was mistaken; for to visit at Lord Shirley's was for many reasons the first wish of his heart. And seeing that the earl looked mortified and vexed, he said, "But I believe I can put off my engagement for to-morrow, and if I can I will have the honour to wait on you." He then inquired how Lady Shirley was; and Lord Shirley left him, satisfied with Melvyn and with himself—for he had *conquered* himself—he had subdued his incipient hatred of a man who had not, to the best of his knowledge, offended him, and whose greatest crime in his eyes was his having dared to admire, and acknowledge that he admired, the woman whom he himself deemed worthy of universal admiration.

"How pleased Catherine will be," thought Lord Shirley, "when I tell her what I have done!" But he hoped at the same time she would not seem very *violently* delighted.

"My dearest lord," said Catherine, when she saw him, "I was so disappointed this morning to hear, when I woke, that you were gone out without seeing me! I was hurt, indeed I was!"

"You would not have been so if you had known whither I was gone—no inducement less strong than that which I felt, would have made me go out without seeing you."

"Then whither have you been? Oh! I guess," she cried, clasping her hands in joy; "you have been to call on Mr. Melvyn! O my dear Shirley! how glad I am!" And, as she fondly embraced him, the earl thought he never could be uneasy again. "But how is he? How is Melvyn?" she resumed; "How does he look? Does his arm give him pain? I was very uneasy to hear him complain of it yesterday."

"If you ask me three questions at once,"

replied Lord Shirley coolly, "how do you expect that I can give you distinct replies? Mr. Melvyn looks well, but his arm is painful, and he has called in Mr. ——."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. But you need not look so alarmed, for he has promised to dine here to-morrow."

"Has he? I hope I shall be well enough to sit at table!" And Lord Shirley tried to believe he hoped so too.

But she was not well enough to appear; and perhaps Lord Shirley received Melvyn, behaved to him, and did the honours of his table to his guests, much better than if Lady Shirley had been present. To Melvyn it had been a matter almost of indifference whether she appeared or not, as he had now got the *entrée* of the house; and already one of his companions had said to him, winking his eye, "Ah! Melvyn, you were always a lucky dog! I do believe you *bribed* those horses to run away! How much corn did you promise them? He!"

CHAPTER XXI.

The evening of Lady Shirley's assembly at length arrived; and as it was her first party, every one that had been invited made a point of attending. Melvyn, of course, was now one of the invited guests; but he did not arrive amongst the first of the party. The fine suite of rooms on the first floor was entirely thrown open for the reception of company, and the rooms below were opened for refreshments. The hall, the staircase, and the wide balcony in front of the house, were full of the finest plants and flowers; and white and crimson lamps mixed amongst the foliage, added to the general beauty and splendour of the scene. At an early hour the rooms were crowded; and the last room in the suite, where the instruments were, and where Lady Shirley and her musical acquaintance performed, became very soon so overpoweringly hot and full that the voices were heard to great disadvantage, and the singers sung with difficulty. Lady Shirley, therefore, when about to accompany herself in a simple ballad on the lute, chose to remove into the front room, in which there was at present a less unfavourable air.

Lord Shirley was at this moment in his own study, a room in the back part of the house, whither he had been summoned to receive some important directions relative to a motion which he was to make the next night in the House of Lords, and had been most reluctantly obliged to give up for a time the delight of hearing Catherine sing.

Lady Shirley fixed her chair rather near one of the windows; and after a very beautiful prelude she was beginning a soft and plaintive air, when suddenly raising her eyes to the window, she was observed to start and turn very pale; then abruptly rising, she went to the window, on which all eyes near her were fixed; and the company saw a man's face amidst the green foliage of the flowers, on which the light of the lamps shed a sort of ghastly hue. But as soon as Lady Shirley reached the window and bent towards the face, it disappeared; and pale and trembling she leaned against the side of the room.

"What a strange thing!" cried one. "Who could it be?—No wonder your ladyship was frightened; surely it was a madman!—Well, I am surprised you dare go near him. But how could he get there?—But was it really a man's face?" All these questions assailed Lady Shirley at once, while under no small consternation herself she was struggling for composure and for power to speak.

"Yes, it was a man's face, and a very formidable-looking one too, which I saw looking wildly at me as I began to sing; and whoever the person was, you saw he disappeared directly. But we will interrogate the servants on the subject; for how they could allow such a thing I cannot imagine."

"Dear me!" cried one; "what courage your ladyship has! I own I should have died of the fright." And the wondering and the exclamations had not ceased when Melvyn, followed by Lord Shirley, entered the room, and were both surrounded with persons eager to narrate the strange scene that had taken place.

Lady Shirley timidly raised her eyes to her lord's, to see the effect of the relation on him; and when they mentioned her turning very pale and seeming ready to faint, she saw him start, change colour, and look at her with a scrutinizing attention.

"This is very strange!" cried he. "What could the servants be doing to suffer a man to climb up to the balcony? And I wonder, Lady Shirley, instead of going to the window yourself, you did not send for one of the servants to seize him."

"No doubt Lady Shirley knew what she was doing," said Sophia Clermont in a low voice to a lady behind the earl; and the latter, as she intended, heard what she said.

"Well, have you told us all you know of this wonderful history?" said Melvyn with an expression of countenance Catherine did not like at all; "because, if you have, I will take it up where you left off; for I was below, and saw the beginning, progress, and end of the scene. In the first place, I must clear the servants of all blame; for the crowd kept them off by force when they endeavoured to pull the fellow down as he was climbing; and when he had taken his station, much to the amusement of the populace, some of whom vainly endeavoured to follow his example, not having length or strength of limb sufficient for the purpose; the servants dared not enter the

room to seize him there, because they are always expressly forbidden ever to come in when their lady is singing! and as they thought,—which no doubt was the case,—that the poor man only meant to listen to the concord of sweet sounds, they acted quite right."

While he spoke, he occasionally looked at Lady Shirley with great meaning, and not a variation of her tell-tale cheek was lost upon him; nor indeed on her lord, who was going to speak, when Melvyn stopped him, and said, "Stay, my lord, I have not yet done. When this young giant let himself down again—"

"Young!" cried a lady. "He looked quite old, and seemed to have only one eye and a shaggy red wig."

"True, such was his dress and such his seeming appearance. But when he reached the ground, the mob, envying him perhaps an exaltation which they could not reach, seized and hustled him: and in the scuffle, which I hastened forward to prevent, they tore off his wig, his bandage, and his false mustachios; and he turned out to be one of the finest and handsomest, though fiercest-looking young men I ever saw."

"Indeed!" exclaimed one.

"Very mysterious!" cried another.

"*Very*," observed Miss Clermont in an emphatic tone not lost upon the earl; while Lady Shirley forced herself to ask what became of the poor creature.

"Oh! I took him under my protection," replied Melvyn, looking at her significantly. "Your ladyship might be sure I would not suffer him to be ill used, though I assure you the fellow was ready to knock me down for my interferenee; and telling me he hated to owe obligations to any one, he did knock down one after the other two men, who again assailed him; then running away with the swiftness of the antelope, disappeared in a moment."

"This is most strange!" said Lord Shirley. But Catherine, who knew it not to be as strange as it was distressing, said nothing. But when both a lady and gentleman thoughtlessly or maliciously observed, that no doubt this disguised listener was a rejected lover of Lady Shirley's, Catherine turned on them a look of such severe displeasure and disdain, as no one would have thought her gentle countenance could have assumed.

"But the song, do not let us lose the song!" cried several voices at once. And Lady Shirley, though conscious her nerves were much unstrung by what had passed, resumed her seat and her lute, but turned her back on the window, for she declared that the idea of seeing the face again would render her unable to sing a note.

"The face had better *not* appear there again," said Lord Shirley.

"I think so too," said Miss Clermont drily.

Lady Shirley sighed but spoke not, and immediately began her song. The firm full tones of her voice were gone, but its sweetness and its pathos remained; and Lord Shirley, though suspicious and displeased, and convinced more than ever that a secret and a mystery were attached to Catherine which she was anxious he should not penetrate, felt his heart entirely softened in her favour by the powers of her song.

Lady Shirley now called on another lady to perform, and her request was attended to. But while she was crossing from one room to another, Melvyn drew near her, and, unobserved by Lord Shirley, whispered these words in her ear, "Fear not, I will not betray you!"

"Betray me, sir! I have nothing to betray," cried Catherine, starting from him and colouring with indignation.

"No! what, no secret that you wish should be kept from Lord Shirley! You cannot suppose I should not know that young man again; he is too handsome and too remarkable ever to be forgotten!"

Catherine said no more; but a deep sigh expressed to him the disquiet of her soul, and seemed to request his forbearance.

At length, to the great joy of Catherine, this evening, so fruitful in disquieting circumstances, was at an end; and some of the company no doubt departed to later meetings, where "the man's face at the window" was commented upon according to the different tempers and disposition of the parties speaking; but even candour itself could not help allowing that the circumstance, acompanied by Melvyn's communications, bore a very mysterious appearance.

"Well, all I can say is, I am glad the thing did not happen in my balcony," said a lady not remarkable for the discretion of her conduct; "*my* lord would not have taken it so well."

"I dare say not," replied another lady sarcastically; "but Lady Shirley is a sort of privileged person."

"Yes—she is a reputed saint," retorted the other; "but I do not know that she is therefore in reality better than other people."

"What does this mean?" asked the Duchess of C——. "Is this foolish circumstance supposed at all to involve the question of whether Lady Shirley's sanctity be real or assumed?—I believe, ladies, we should all of us think ourselves very ill used, if our reputations were in any respect called in question, because a madman or any impudent fellow chose to climb into our balcony to hear fine music; for what could Lady Shirley have in common with a person of this description?"

"Ay, that 's the question! But Lady Shirley did not always move in high life."

"No—but her mind was always above her situation, and I am convinced no situation, no association, however low, could have degraded

or contaminated the mind, heart, or manners of Catherine Shirley."

"O dear! I am sure we admire Lady Shirley as much as your grace does," replied one of the auditors—"still I see no reason why, if Lady Shirley seems to be involved in any mysterious circumstances, she should not be animadverted upon like other people."

"Nor I, madam; but it is the comments and the commentators alone that, in my opinion, make this circumstance mysterious."

The ladies said no more; for the duchess was so much the ton, and her parties so first-rate, that they did not like to offend her; and they saw that she resented any insinuation to the disadvantage of her friend.

But the duchess spoke as she thought; and it was her evidently unstudied and natural comments on the circumstance, that quieted Lord Shirley's mind so far as to forbid his putting any questions to Catherine on the subject, likely to betray what he knew she would consider in him as degrading suspicions. But he was not always so fortunate as to hear only such comments as those of the friendly duchess. He sometimes called on Sophia Clermont; and now that he felt by her tone of voice, when commenting on the odd scene at his house, that she imputed to Lady Shirley some private knowledge of the cause of it, he was anxious to call on her as soon as he could, though from respect for his wife he never once thought of mentioning to Sophia what he had overheard. And Sophia herself was always very guarded in all she said of Lady Shirley.

Mrs. Somerley, who had never forgiven Catherine's spirited resentment of the trick which she had played her, was unfortunately with Sophia when the earl called on her the day after Catherine's assembly; and as she had no reason for sparing Lady Shirley's fame or Lord Shirley's feelings, she began commenting on what had passed, as freely as if he had not been present. Perhaps not even pretensions to excelling wit excite so much ill-will and detraction, as pretensions to excelling piety and virtue; for the claims of any one to wit are, after all, dependent on the opinions of others; but the actual practice of religion and all the active duties which it enjoins, are things that admit of proof; and the only resource in such cases is to impute to the actors a hypocritical desire of the praises of man, not an operating love of God; and also to attribute to them in secret the commission of crimes and sins which more than counterbalance their apparent sanctity of life. No wonder, therefore, that poor Catherine was now the theme of invidious wonder and implied censure.

"So, my lord," said Mrs. Somerley to Lord Shirley, "you had quite an adventure at your house the other night. Lady Shirley is a lucky woman to have had her first assembly signalized by such a romantic scene. It will make her parties quite the rage—something so novel and *piquant*—almost as good as the circumstance that made old Lady Champernown's parties the ton again, after they had been long deserted."

"And what circumstance was that, madam?"

"Oh! at a ball she gave, a good gentleman was so obliging as to fall down dead in the dance; and you have no notion how crowded her parties were the whole winter after. It was such a fine rouse, such a fine excitement to the feelings, you know."

"I sincerely hope," replied Lord Shirley warmly, "that Lady Shirley's parties will be deserted for ever, if they are to be peopled only by such awful events as that which you have described."

"Nay, my lord, a madman, or a disguised lover, looking in at the balcony window up which he climbed on purpose, is surely as interesting, and certainly a more romantic event than a fit of apoplexy."

"For shame, Mrs. Somerley! what a license you give your tongue!" said Sophia, seeing Lord Shirley was too painfully agitated to speak. "What ground has any one for supposing that Lady Shirley could have a lover—much less a disguised one! and if she has rejected lovers, they must respect her too much to venture an indiscretion, and a daring act like the one in question."

This speech, instead of quieting, irritated the earl's feelings still more; for he contrasted its candour, and the high opinion which it expressed of Catherine, with her observations, not intended as he believed for his ear, and the tone with which she had uttered at his house the little word "very."

"So then," observed Lord Shirley at last, "this poor vulgar fellow in my balcony is converted into a disguised lover, is he?"

"Surely, Lord Shirley, this is not to be wondered at. Did not Melvyn describe him as a beautiful youth when his wig was off? and though I dare say he was jealous to frenzy and wished to poison him, was it not evident that Melvyn seemed to make a merit to Lady Shirley of his having made a point of protecting him? And could not any one who had eyes, see during the remainder of the evening that there was a great deal of whispering and meaning, conscious looks, and so forth, between them? At least, so certain shrewd observers have told me."

Though Lord Shirley fanced he had seen all this himself, and was thereby at the time rendered very suspicious, he could not bear that this bold gossiping woman should know that others had observed the same. But while he was trying to find words to express his resentment as mildly as possible, Sophia, well knowing that he could not fail to see that out of tenderness to him she spoke against her

real opinion in taking Lady Shirley's part, gently but forcibly reproved her friend for always putting the harshest construction on everything; and wondering that, as the heroine of the tale was Lady Shirley, she was not assured at once that there could have been no ground for suspicion.

"Oh! my dear, you know, with all due respect to Lord Shirley, I have not that devoted reverence and love which your generous heart feels for Lady Shirley. I know that you swear by her, and think the world never saw such a woman."

"Does Miss Clermont think so, madam?" asked Lord Shirley, looking with great kindness on Sophia; "then she thinks with that justice and liberality which might be expected from a mind like hers." But recollecting how ill this representation agreed with what he had heard the night before, he added, "And I hope she never sees more than a transient reason for thinking otherwise."

"Certainly not," replied Sophia blushing, because she understood him. "Whatever suspicion may momentarily attach to such a woman as Lady Shirley, it must fall to the ground, because it has nothing to cling to. Can any one in their senses suppose that a woman who not only is pious, but has the courage to avow that she is so, and who has resolution enough to go counter to the usual habits of fashionable life, because she thinks them wrong, and by that means exposes herself to be thought righteous over-much,—could possibly have a mysterious visiter or acquaintance unknown to her husband, and have a secret understanding with a Mr. Melvyn, in which her husband was no partaker?—Impossible! for, if it were so, then must Lady Shirley be a hypocrite, and the worst of hypocrites; because she would be taking advantage of the very high character which she bears, to allow herself more license than women of lower pretensions to virtue dare take."

"True, very true," said Lord Shirley sighing.

"You and I, Sophia," replied Mrs. Somerley, "draw opposite conclusions from the same premises; for I am inclined to believe that persons who say many prayers, and are so strict in self-denials, must be conscious that they have more secret faults to atone for, and more tendency to evil to guard against, than their less rigid neighbours.—Oh, *à-propos!*" she added before Lord Shirley could utter the angry reply rising to his lips; "A friend of mine was so amused last Sunday evening,—perhaps I ought to say *edified*,—while waiting for his carriage in a house opposite yours, my lord; for happening to look into your drawing room, he saw, while we sinners, and you amongst the rest, were going from party to party, and driving ourselves and our servants to perdition; he saw, I say, the young and holy Lady Shirley with a large book (a Bible no doubt) open before her, reading aloud to the General her grandfather!"

"Indeed! madam," said the earl; "and your friend was amused at the sight, was he? though I own to you, I think *edified* was a better word, as I see nothing amusing or laughable, but something very proper and very natural in a granddaughter reading the Bible on a Sunday evening to her grandfather; and all I am ashamed of is, my own bad taste in having hitherto forborne to make the third in so interesting a group."

"I would advise you, my lord, to have the countess painted reading her Bible, as Rembrandt's mother is painted; and make a present of it to the Bible Society."

"I thank you for the first hint, and shall certainly adopt it; and have the General and Lady Shirley both in one piece; ay, and myself too."

"You had better be painted at once as a Holy Family, Lord Shirley. When the little bambino comes, the countess would make a lovely Madonna; and you, as you are too young and handsome for Joseph, would do very well for the Angel, and the General for Joseph; but I doubt whether aunt Delaney would like to sit either for Anne or Elizabeth. —But how I run on! Pray, my lord, do not tell Lady Shirley my scheme for a Holy Family."

"No, madam; I dare not, lest she should scold me for keeping such company." Then with a hasty bow he left the room. He however derived some good from Mrs. Somerley's impertinence. He saw that by going to parties himself on a Sunday evening he deprived his wife of his support and sanction to her conduct, and that he left her exposed to ridicule from which his presence at home would save her.

He therefore resolved to be of the reading party; and when on the following Sunday, instead of going to Lady S——'s Sunday assembly, or Lady ——'s music, he presented himself as an auditor to Lady Shirley's reading, Catherine welcomed him almost with tearful joy; and when he declared his intention of always passing his Sunday evenings in that manner in future, she assured him that this alone had been wanting to her felicity, and that now her felicity was complete.

"Can this woman be a hypocrite?" thought Lord Shirley. "Impossible!"

Lord Shirley was really in earnest concerning the picture, and had it begun immediately by a celebrated artist, intending it should be finished after Lady Shirley's confinement, and appear in the next Exhibition. Accordingly Lady Shirley sat regularly till she was unable to leave home; and the picture therefore was in great forwardness when she became the happy mother of twins—a boy and a girl; and all Lord Shirley's fears and anxieties concerning the mysterious secret were forgotten in the new delights of a parent.

CHAPTER XXII.

When Lady Shirley was entirely recovered, the picture was resumed, and it was soon ready to send to Somerset House; and the figures being as well grouped as they were well executed, and being all three striking likenesses, it was thought one of the best pieces of the master.

The seclusion in which Lord and Lady Shirley had lately lived had prevented the former almost from recollecting either his suspicions relative to the man in the balcony, and Catherine's secret, or his jealousy of Melvyn; but the latter returned the very first moment he saw Melvyn with Catherine. Mrs. Somerley was right, he found; there did seem a secret understanding between them, an intimacy for which he could not account.—He saw Melvyn, at a party at Miss Clermont's, approach Catherine and speak in a low voice to her. He saw her start and change colour, and eagerly reply. He then saw her walk with him into the next room where there were fewer people, and sit down by him on a sofa. He also saw that their conversation was of so interesting a nature, that Catherine seemed unconscious of the presence of any one; but that on looking up and seeing him draw near her, she broke off abruptly what she was saying; and looking confused, took the arm of a lady near her, and forced conversation with her. But before the evening closed, he saw her go in search of Melvyn, and again enter into conversation apart with him. Lady Shirley had just begged her lord to go and see for the carriage, and he now thought she had done it to get rid of his watchful eye. But he was more eager to remove her from her dangerous companion, than she, he thought, would be eager to go; and accordingly he went in search of his servants, one of whom told him his carriage could not draw up, because a carriage stopped the way, which had been vainly called several times, and yet would not drive off.

"Whose carriage is it?" asked Lord Shirley.

"Mr.——, Mr.——, dear me, I forget the name; and yet I have spoken it often enough; for it is a gentleman who called two or three times on my lady and the General last week, when you, my lord, were gone to your regiment."

"Do you mean Melvyn?"

"Yes, yes; that's the name." And at this moment Melvyn's footman asked Lord Shirley whether his master was not coming.

A "Confound your master!" nearly escaped the lips of Lord Shirley; but recollecting himself, he said he would go and let his master know that his carriage stopped the way. He then returned to the rooms; but seeing Melvyn still talking to Lady Shirley, who seemed, he thought, to listen to him with delighted attention, he dared not trust himself to speak to him; but begged a gentleman near him to let Mr. Melvyn know his carriage had stopped the way some time. And Melvyn, with a significant bend of the head to Catherine, which she as significantly returned, reluctantly took his leave and departed.

"You seem very intimate with Mr. Melvyn," said Lord Shirley, as calmly as he could, to Catherine as he drove home; "really your intimacy almost amounts to a flirtation."

"Flirtation! that word makes me smile when applied to me; for you know I am no flirt."

"Therefore your singling out one man to talk to apart is the more striking, and likely to occasion remarks."

"That is very true, my dear lord," replied Catherine; "and if I can help it, I will never do it again."

"If you can help it, Catherine!"

"Yes; for really I must own Mr. Melvyn's conversation is sometimes interesting to me." And she sighed as she ended her sentence.

Lord Shirley dared not trust himself to continue the conversation, for all his worst fears seemed confirmed; and he again believed that Catherine, unknown perhaps to herself, had always felt for him that liking of which love is compounded, and that now his conversation was become necessary to her happiness.

The next day Sophia Clermont said to him, well knowing the effect she would produce, "You never told me lady Shirley was a fine harp-player; but I have heard such raptures about her playing, and the beauty of her figure while playing!"

"Impossible! Lady Shirley never plays to any one but me, because her father thought the harp exhibited the person too much; and as both he and Catherine and I entertain the same opinion, I am sure no one has described to you her harp-playing from having heard it; at least no *man* can have so described it."

"No man but Melvyn; and Lady Shirley has played to *him*."

On hearing this, Lord Shirley started from his seat pale and speechless with indignation.

"It is false! it must be false!" cried he; "and Melvyn is a liar and a boaster."

"He may be both," replied Sophia, calmly, and in her heart enjoying to see Lord Shirley suffering those jealous pangs which he had inflicted on her; "but I assure you this is what he told me; I ought to add, however, that he enjoined me secresy, as Lady Shirley desired him not to mention that she had played to him; but I could not think it was not to be known to you."

"Plays to him! and enjoins him to be secret! This is worse and worse," cried Lord Shirley; "and I cannot believe it."

"Why not? You know she favours him more than any other man, talks to him more, distinguishes him more."

"Distinguishes him indeed! if she displays her fine figure to him at that instrument. But I will know whether this be true or not directly," he added, snatching up his hat.

"And how, my lord?"

"How? By asking Catherine herself."

Sophia put up her lip disdainfully, and smiled as if in derision.

"You may sneer, madam; but I will trust the tongue that never yet told me, or any one else, a voluntary falsehood."

"Very confiding, indeed! But if, which I now do not credit, Lady Shirley was induced from vanity or a tenderer feeling thus to indulge Mr. Melvyn, would not this argue such a dereliction from principle, as to make the necessary lie to screen her error an easy effort to her?"

Lord Shirley felt the force of what she said; and without trusting his voice to speak, ran down stairs, and directed his hurried steps to his own house. Some time before he reached the door, he saw Melvyn leaving it; and this sight added to his perturbation. As soon as the door was opened to him, he ran up into the drawing-room, but Lady Shirley was not there; he then proceeded into her own dressing-room, where stood her harp, and by it Catherine herself looking over some harp music.

"So, madam," said Lord Shirley, almost breathless with emotion, "Mr. Melvyn has been here; and I suppose you have been playing the harp to him!"

Catherine looked up, and smiling incredulousy, said, "No, no; you cannot really suppose that; you know better, my dear lord."

"Answer me; no evasion. Did Melvyn or did he not ever hear and see you play the harp?"

"Yes," replied Catherine blushing, "he has done both."

"Then he shall never do either again." And seizing the harp, he dashed it on the floor.

Unnumbered feelings of varied degrees of agony now tinted with their different hues the cheek of Lady Shirley; but its paleness alone at last remained, while she sat in silent contemplation of her angry lord, and waiting to learn the cause of violence so unusual. That violence subdued itself; and in a broken faltering tone her wretched husband, ashamed of the degradation in her eyes to which the indulgence of his passion had exposed him, besought her to forgive him what he could not forgive himself.

"What *have* I to forgive?" said Catherine. "Not the injury to my harp, for that must be an *effect*; it is the cause of that effect that I must have to forgive, and what was it?"

"Can you *ask*, when I heard you own that you had allowed Melvyn to see you play the harp?"

"I *could* not say so, because I did not allow him. But one evening when I was last at Hampton, and the heat of the weather had forced me to open the curtains as well as windows, Mr. Melvyn was passing the back of our house on foot; and hearing music and seeing a light, he leaped the pales and came up to the window. I was at my harp; and wholly unconscious that I was either heard or seen, I played and sung a considerable time, till my grandfather called me to him, fearing that the air was growing too chill; and Mr. Melvyn without discovering himself went away. The next morning he called, and told me of what he styled his *happy daring*."

"Wretch!" muttered Lord Shirley. "Well, and did you enjoin him to secresy?"

"I *did*. I said that, though hurt and *provoked* at what he told me, I would not resent his presumption, because he was not aware of the aversion I had to be seen at my harp; and that to avoid importunity to do what I never would do, that is, play to any one, I wished it not to be known that I was able to play; therefore I desired he would never tell any one that he heard me, though it was merely by accident. He promised compliance, and left me."

"Yes—and well did he *keep* his word, for he has told Miss Clermont, under a promise of secresy indeed; and she thinking I was in the secret imparted it to *me*, and with what feelings I heard it I need not describe to you. But why did you not tell me this as soon as it happened?"

"Because I knew you would be as much hurt as I was at Melvyn's having seen me play; and to say the truth, the circumstance was so disagreeable to me that I wished to forget it as fast as possible. Are you satisfied now?"

"Satisfied! Yes—but so ashamed! and so angry both with Melvyn and myself! He, you see, concealed the most important part of the truth—that he heard you by accident."

"How do you know that? Miss Clermont might hear and relate inaccurately—a far more likely circumstance than that Mr. Melvyn should be guilty of so unprincipled a misrepresentation."

"You seem to think very *highly* of this man."

"I do;—but not so highly but that you are welcome to know every thought of my heart towards him."

"Indeed! Well I must and do believe you. —But then, O Catherine, how can I ever forgive myself? I am ashamed to look at your harp."

"I hope it is not much hurt, for it was my father's present," said Catherine, tears forcing themselves down her cheeks.

Lord Shirley was affected even to agony. But scenes of repentant and forgiving fondness it is better to imagine than to describe. Suffice, that as soon as they had recovered from

their agitation, Lord Shirley declared that he would go back to Miss Clermont, and explain the state of the case to her.

Sophia knew very well already what he had to communicate; and biting her lips and looking down, she received what he said with nothing but a significant "Oh, that's the case, is it? I conclude that I heard inaccurately;—certainly that is more likely than that Melvyn should wilfully misrepresent, or Lady Shirley do wrong.—But come, let us talk of something else."

"No madam, no; for *I* can talk only of that which is uppermost in my thoughts; and I must own that your manner does not satisfy me, because you do not seem satisfied yourself."

"To be honest, my lord, I cannot see any force in Lady Shirley's reasons for not telling you of Melvyn's having seen her at her harp unknown to herself; and as her heart seems to have been so oppressed by the consciousness, I wonder that she did not reveal it to you, by way of lightening her mind, as soon as she saw you.—My lord, I do not like mystery or concealment between married people, or even lovers, for where there is much reserve there is little love; and if a wife made a friend the sharer in a secret which she kept from her husband, I should instantly believe the friend more near her heart than her husband himself.—Oh how differently do *I* feel on such subjects! and how differently should I act! To my husband I should impart even every trifle that interested me; not in order to prove my confidence in him, but because I could not help associating him and his idea in every thing which I did, thought, or felt."

Lord Shirley sighed, but did not reply, for he was sure that Catherine's practice was very different.

Sophia, though Lord Shirley did not speak, saw that her words sunk deep into his heart; and by his subsequent gloom and abstraction, she felt that she had given his confidence in Catherine, or at least in her affection for him, a home stroke.—Soon after, Lord Shirley rose, pressed her hand with some fervour, and withdrew.

Melvyn in the meanwhile was not idle in his plans for ruining the fame and destroying the wedded happiness of the man whom he hated, by convincing him that his wife was an adulteress.

Catherine, who in every respect endeavoured to live up to the precepts of the Gospel, when she gave alms, conformed as much as was in her power to the injunction of not "letting her left hand know what her right hand did." And having once by accident been acquainted with the wretched state of a poor deserving family in an obscure street in her neighbourhood, she had become the ministering angel of all the families residing in the same staircase; but in order that her interference should be secret, it was her custom as soon as her lord had gone out to ride before breakfast,—a custom ordered him by his physicians for a bad headache,—to put on a thick white veil, and go unattended to the garrets in question.

One morning as she was going on this charitable errand, Melvyn returning from a ball saw her cross the square, and followed her, not knowing at first, who it was, but thinking her a very fine woman. He soon, however, from her height and commanding air, recognised Lady Shirley, and resolved to watch and see whither she went. He did so, and walked up and down the street, still however keeping out of her sight, till she returned, and without looking to the right or left proceeded towards her own house. Melvyn immediately entered where she had entered; and knocking at the first door, it was opened to him by a well-known face—a woman who, when in the prime of her youth and beauty, had been for some time under his protection. This woman, in reply to some of his questions relative to a young lady who had just quitted that place, said that the lady came there very often, and she believed that she was a good lady enough, but very partial; for she did not give her as much as she gave others in the staircase, though to be sure she rarely came without giving her something, indeed more than she asked for, for she had given her a Testament, and had bidden her read it.

Melvyn saw, therefore, that in this offended woman he should have a ready agent for any thing he wished, and he took care to give her money enough to satisfy her avarice.

"But tell me," said he, "does this lady relieve and support all the poor on this floor and the next?"

"Almost, and on the one above too; and she reads the Bible to them sometimes if they wish it."

"So, then, she has left nothing for me to do, but read the Bible to you, Charlotte," said Melvyn laughing.

"Nay, sir, I do not think that much in *your* way," replied Charlotte.

"You are mistaken, child," answered he. "But are you sure that there are no poor here but what she visits?"

"I recollect there is one family on the next floor to this, that she has not thought poor and helpless enough to require regular aid. But I find that the father is now bed-ridden with the rheumatism and ague, and one of the children is very bad too; therefore, no doubt when she comes hither again, they will apply to her."

"No, they shall not, for I will be their physician and priest myself; so lead the way to their room, Charlotte."

She did so; and Melvyn saw a scene that made him inclined to be charitable even for charity's sake. But it was a scene of distress

which money could relieve, if not as yet remove; and he had much to give. Then, having made them promise not to apply to the good lady, as he would give them all they could possibly want, he promised to see them again soon, and departed.

The next morning he watched Catherine from her house, and saw her take the same direction as the day before; and, being sure whither she was going, he stole down another street which led to the same place; and before she reached it, he was sitting by the bed-side of his new acquaintance, and saw her enter (the door being ajar) the room of the poor people opposite. Soon after, he heard her reading a chapter in the Bible to them, and explaining to them their hopes of salvation, and the foundation of that hope. But Melvyn did not choose to discover himself yet—he therefore gave his *protégés* more money; and having promised, if they liked it, to read the Bible to them the next time he came, he stole down stairs unperceived by Catherine.

As some of these poor were very old and ill, and expressed themselves soothed and cheered by Lady Shirley's assistance, she made a point of visiting them regularly every day; therefore, Melvyn was always sure of finding her at her post; and at length he chose that she should see him at his. Accordingly, one day he left his invalids, gently shutting the door after him, just as Catherine had entered the opposite room and was looking towards him. He did not seem to see her, but hastily ran down stairs with his handkerchief towards his face.

"How strange!" thought Catherine. "Surely, that was Melvyn! and does *he* visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction? And why not?" whispered her conscience, reproving her for the pharisaical spirit she evinced in thinking him less likely to do good than herself. However, she resolved to know why she saw him at such an unusual place, especially as her being liable to meet him might make it necessary for her to forego such frequent visits there.

She, therefore, as soon as her business with her own poor was finished, knocked at the door of the opposite room; and, being admitted, inquired into the state of their health, and so forth. They all eagerly assured her, that, though very ill, they were no longer poor, as a kind, good gentleman had come to see them twice, and had given them food and money for all their wants—advice, and all.

"And is he to come again?"

"O yes."

"Well, don't mention having seen me to him," said Catherine; and saying she was glad that they had found such a friend, she departed, gratified to see that even men of the world were better than she could have expected.

"And surely," thought Catherine, "if I take care that he never sees me, I may continue my visits as usual." And she did continue them for at least three days without seeing Melvyn, as he was afraid that seeing him often might frighten her away; and he wished it to appear, when inquiry should be made, that they had very frequently been there at the same time. On the fourth morning, however, he resolved to be seen; therefore, begging that the door might be opened for air, he began reading a chapter in the Bible aloud to the poor man who was ill in bed, and he sat with his profile towards the door; so that Catherine, as she left the opposite room, could not fail of seeing and of being seen. The wife and the children immediately rose and curtsied to her. This obliged Melvyn, of course, to turn his head; and exclaiming in a tone of astonishment, "Lady Shirley!" he was going to rise, when she prevented him, and desired him to go on with his benevolent office. This was almost too much even for his hypocrisy, especially as he knew that Charlotte was grinning opposite him; he did, however, proceed; as he read well habitually, Catherine was not aware how little his feelings had to do in his excellence.

"Little did I ever think that I should meet you here," said Catherine, blushing and smiling; "but I must say, my good friend, this meeting will add greatly to the interest with which I meet you in the world." She then ran down stairs.

However, though she walked fast, Melvyn was soon by her side. But Lady Shirley, aware how improper it was for her to be seen alone with Melvyn, was going to beg him to leave her, when her caution was rendered vain by the previous artifice of Melvyn, as, in order to take the chance of accidental circumstances, he had appointed two gentlemen to take him up in his own barouche at the stable-keeper's; and they met him and Catherine just as they entered the street where the man lived.

"Holla! Melvyn! holla! Come, get in," cried one; "but perhaps you are better engaged, and will not go now," staring at Catherine, who doubled her veil over her face, and walked rapidly on, while Melvyn pulled off his hat and said "Good morning!"

"Lady Shirley, I am sure!" cried the other.

"Say that at your peril!" cried Melvyn, pretending anger.

"I may not *say* it, but I will prove it for my own satisfaction," he replied, jumping out of the barouche, and following Catherine at a distance; Melvyn in vain having attempted to hold him, or pretended to attempt to hold him. When Catherine reached her own door, her watchful follower, having seen enough to convince him that the person who entered could be only the mistress of the mansion, returned back in triumph.

"I told you so—I knew it was she; for I saw her go in."

"That proves nothing—for it might be her abigail."

"No—servants do not open *both* sides of the folding-door to admit a lady's maid; and this lady went in as soon as the door opened, and both doors were opened by two servants."

"I see you are incorrigible," said Melvyn; "and the more I deny, I only make you believe the more; yet reflect how *improbable* it is that such a woman as Lady Shirley should walk with me in the street before nine o'clock—nay, how *impossible* it is!"

"Not at all; you are an insinuating fellow, Melvyn; and it is said that the greatest saints are the greatest sinners."

Melvyn on this, thought proper to put himself in a passion, and to declare that, if they would not promise to drop this subject entirely, he would not go any further with them on their projected tour.

Catherine in the meanwhile was uneasy at having been seen in the street alone with Melvyn at so early an hour; and resolved that she would tell her lord all that had passed, to guard against very probable and dangerous misrepresentations. But Lord Shirley was so much engaged in parliamentary business, that she rarely saw him when she could have spoken to him; and when he came home full of smiles and tenderness to her to be soothed after his fatigues, she had not resolution to convert his smiles into frowns, and his tenderness into coldness, by any irritating communication.

"No," said Catherine, "I go to our country seat to-morrow, and when my dear lord follows me I will tell him all."

At noon Lady Shirley set off for the country; and the earl, on his way to the House of Lords, called on Sophia Clermont.—Sophia, who had her cue given her by Melvyn, had told Mrs. Somerley, who would, she knew, tell Lord Shirley, that Maitland and Sir Harry Turton had seen Lady Shirley walking alone with Melvyn before breakfast, and in an obscure street. On Mrs. Somerley's declaring that she should like to hear the tale from the men themselves, Sophia sent for them, and they related every particular; while Sophia hypocritically entreated that, for the sake of poor dear Lady Shirley's fame and the peace of Lord Shirley, they would mention to no one else what they had seen.

They promised silence at the moment, probably out of envy of Melvyn, and because they were jealous of his supposed success. But Mrs. Somerley protested to Sophia, when alone with her, that having never forgiven Lord Shirley his conduct towards her, and certain rudenesses towards herself, nothing should prevent her telling him what was said and thought of his countess.—This was what the cunning Sophia expected and hoped for; and at this very moment of time Lord Shirley appeared.

"The very man!" cried Mrs. Somerley; "the very man we were talking of! Talk of——"

"Nay," said Lord Shirley smiling; "do not let me have the mortification of hearing that vulgar musty proverb from the lips of a gentlewoman."

"Severe as usual!" replied Mrs. Somerley. "But pray, my lord, if you are so severe on others, how can you expect that others will spare you? Certainly, unless you bribe me very high, I must vent my spleen in telling every one of Lady Shirley's walks before breakfast alone in the street with that charming fellow Melvyn."

"You are at liberty, madam," replied Lord Shirley, "to propagate the falsehood if you please; for I am sure that no one will believe it."

"It is no falsehood, my lord. Your friend Sophia there can tell you that it is a fact; and that she as well as I heard Maitland and Sir Harry Turton declare solemnly that they saw them twice."

"My dear Clara, how could you tell this, when I begged you not?"

"Then it is true; is it?" said Lord Shirley, trembling in every limb.

"My lord, these gentlemen declared to me that they saw them; and in presence of Mrs. Somerley."

"Strange, indeed! What accident could throw them together?" said Lord Shirley; "for they must have met by chance."

"Chance!—And do you really think so, my lord? Oh! no, you do not.—And now, having made you as uneasy as I can at present, I will take my leave." So saying, she left him with Sophia.

"What am I to think of all this?" cried Lord Shirley when alone with her.

"Oh, when you see Lady Shirley again, no doubt she will explain every thing to your satisfaction, as she did before."

"You speak sarcastically, madam."

"Do I, my Lord? Why should you think so?—I merely stated a plain matter of fact."

"True; but there is a way of stating plain matters of fact, so as to insinuate that one does not think them so."

"Why, I must own, that if these things happened to any one but Lady Shirley, I should think that design must have been at work full as much as accident."

"And so should *I*. But the consummate purity of Lady Shirley—her innocence, such as I could not have conceived of——Why do you turn away, Miss Clermont, as if to hide a smile?"

"My lord, this is a subject I cannot and will not discuss with you. If Lady Shirley be the angel you think her, these aspersions on her fair fame will die away and be forgotten; but if these strange appearances be precursors of something more strange still, then

I will listen to the tale of your wrongs and your miseries with patience and sympathy."

Lord Shirley did not reply; but telling her that he must go to the House of Lords on business, he bade her a hasty farewell.

"I find the arrow rankles in his heart, spite of his efforts," said Sophia with a malignant smile, when he was gone; "and I am revenged! 'Poor Sophia Clermont!' Shirley, as I was called on thy account, has found means to avenge herself, and a few days will, I trust, make my vengeance complete."

CHAPTER XXIII.

After a sleepless night, Lord Shirley set out for his country seat—a magnificent but rambling old mansion, one wing of which was fitted up for Lady Shirley's sole use. The last room in this suite had a bow-window, and commanded a very fine prospect; and though a public road ran along the side of the lawn on which it looked, it was hidden by a thick shrubbery. In this room were Catherine's musical instruments, in the next were her books and pencils, and in the first room of the suite she usually sat to work; that room communicated with her bed-room and dressing-room.

As soon as Lord Shirley arrived, which he did in a most perturbed state of mind, and not before it was nearly dark, he ran up to Catherine's apartments. As he approached the last room of the suite, he listened, for he was sure he heard a man's voice, and in rather a loud tone. Again he heard it, and ran forward; but as he had trodden very heavily, and his boots made a noise, Catherine heard him, came out to meet him in evident agitation, and turning the key which was in the lock, put it in her pocket.

"My dear lord," said she in rather a loud tone, "I did not expect you to-night."

"So it seems, madam;—but pray what curiosity have you got in that apartment? you can't suppose that I shall not be anxious to see it!"

"It is no curiosity," replied Catherine turning as pale as death and trembling in every limb, yet listening as she did so.

"I will tell you what it is," said Lord Shirley grasping her arm with frightful eagerness; "it is a man that you have locked in there—I heard his voice; and I believe that man to be Melvyn!"

"Melvyn! would it were!" cried Catherine.

"Audacious woman! give me the key, or my foot shall burst the door open."

"O stay, hold—for your own sake hold, if not for mine;—you will repent, indeed you will."

Lord Shirley heard no more, but with one application of his foot burst the door open, while Catherine conjured him to show mercy to what he saw. But when on entering the room she saw no one there, she audibly thanked her Creator.

"Lady Shirley," cried the earl almost frantic with conflicting passions, "I have thought you pure as an angel, though there was some mystery attached to your story before you knew me."

"My lord, think me so still, spite of appearances, or you will live to repent it."

"I cannot live and think you otherwise; and yet I must, I do . . . . But, madam, I am no longer to be trifled with, and we part this hour unless you tell me who was shut up with you in that apartment, and this very instant, no doubt, escaped by the window."

Lady Shirley paused for a moment. At length she said, "All that I can tell you, my lord, consistent with my duty, I will; there was a man with me, and I would not have had you see him on any account; as, if you had done your duty, you must have seized him; and if you had conquered him, you must then have committed him and condemned him probably to a disgraceful punishment, if not to death; for he is a deserter from your regiment."

"How! a deserter from my regiment shut up with you—and you desirous of preserving his life! What can you have to do with a person of this description?—Who is he, madam? answer me that."

"Not now—I cannot, I dare not, must not; for I am bound not to do it, by the most solemn of oaths; and you know me too well, not to know that no risk to myself—nay, no inducement whatever, can make me break an oath pledged to my God."

"But can't you be absolved from your oath?"

"Yes—I hope so."

"And can't you request to be so."

"Yes, I have requested it over and over again, and lately more strongly than ever. But in the meanwhile, my dear lord, you must promise me to believe that appearances only are against me."

"I know not what to think—this is a most incredible story; what evidence do you offer me of the truth?"

"Time was," said Catherine, mournfully, "when my word was sufficient;—but Mr. Melvyn can testify that—"

"Melvyn testify! And is he then in your confidence? do you let him partake in the secret, spite of your pretended vow, that you conceal from your husband?"

"How can you know me so little? I really blush to be forced to defend myself from so vile a charge. Mr. Melvyn knows nothing from *me*, but circumstances have given him

some light on this mysterious affair; and he knows this poor wretch personally, though he is ignorant of his name and situation, except that he is a deserter from your regiment."

"Ha! light breaks in upon me too; this man, I suppose, was the cause of your illness on the birth-day?"

"He was—I feared that you would see him and recognise him."

"And he was the man in the balcony too?"

"He was."

"But still, why should *you* feel such deep interest in him? Was he ever your lover?"

"My dearest lord!" cried Catherine, hastily, "pray ask me no more questions on this subject now; in time you will, I trust, know every thing, and that burthen be removed from my mind, which has weighed on it ever since we married. In the meantime I conjure you to confide in me implicitly."

"Nay, that is now no longer possible; for there are other appearances so strongly against you!"

"Indeed!"

"Yes—and—" At this moment the servant came in to say that Mr. Melvyn had just called at the door on horseback, to tell them that he had seen a man let himself down from the bow-window at the back of the house, and he thought right to let the family know.

Lord Shirley on hearing this stood the picture of agony and dismay.

"Did not Mr. Melvyn ask for us?—Is he gone without coming in?"

"No, my lady—he only said what I tell you. I told him that my lord was come, and he rode off at full speed."

"Leave us," said Lord Shirley, in a hoarse voice.—"Lady Shirley, Melvyn's knocking at my gate at this hour, and so soon after the disappearance of a man from the window, who was shut up with you, convinces me, though I believe fully in the existence of the other man, that Melvyn and the man who disappeared are the same person."

"My lord!" cried Catherine, vehemently, "you do not, you cannot, you dare not think it! When did I ever deceive you? When did I ever, by even an unguarded look, or word, or action, call my virtue or even my innocence in question?"

"I own you have been very *guarded*. Unguarded! no, no—but I declare, like poor Othello, while I look at you, 'If thou be false, then heaven does mock itself!' " Then bursting into tears he rushed out of the room; and an hour after, Catherine's maid came to say that Lord Shirley was gone to bed with a very bad headache; and, that he might not be disturbed, he would sleep in the green room.

"He has done wisely," said Catherine, commanding herself. But when alone, the agonies of her heart almost threatened for a moment to upset her reason; but prayer, the comfort, the hope, the support and the balm of the confiding Christian, soothed at length her unquiet mind to rest; and leaning on the "Rock of Ages," she, at a late hour, having undressed herself, not choosing to be seen in such evident grief by her servant, betook herself to her bed, where sleep at length visited her.

Not so Lord Shirley; to him sleep was a stranger. But being convinced, the more he considered, that it was more likely Catherine's story was true, than that Melvyn, if he had been the person locked up in the room, should have dared to come to the house,—he resolved to believe as he wished, and went in search of Catherine in order to interrogate her respecting her morning walks.

He found her pale, languid, spiritless; but calm, dignified, and kind. It was some minutes before Lord Shirley could speak. At length he said, "I believe I was very hasty in my opinion last night, and I am sorry for it; but judge for yourself if I have not some excuse for my conduct."

He then related to her what he had heard at Sophia Clermont's; and when he had ended, Catherine with a most placid smile replied, "My dear lord, would I could clear up all your other suspicions as easily I can clear up this!" She then, with all the warmth of a generous nature delighting to expatiate on benevolent actions, described Melvyn's visits and hers to the same stair-case, and for the same purposes. But when she related the scene of Melvyn's being discovered by her reading the Bible to the poor sick family, Lord Shirley, angry as he was, could not help laughing aloud; nor could he help suspecting that Melvyn, having known of Catherine's visits, was only acting a part in order to prejudice her in his favour. But the *bon-hommie* with which Catherine related this story, believing in Melvyn's charity as firmly as in her own, and the serene and sweet expression of her countenance, completely for a while laid the foul fiend in his soul; and assuring her that he believed her statement implicitly, and had resumed his confidence in her, he earnestly conjured her to forgive him his past violence and injustice. Pardon was then mutually exchanged, and peace restored. Still the deserter haunted Lord Shirley's fancy. He feared that Catherine had loved before she knew him, and had loved unworthily; and wretched and outcast as this being was, he feared that he would prove an object of envy and of jealousy to him through life.

After a few days of quiet, if not of perfect happiness, during which the presence of the children was often of great use in preventing them from feeling that their *tête-à-têtes* were not quite so delightful as formerly, they returned to London.

It was now near the last week in June; and Lord Shirley, having appointed to meet Sophia Clermont and a friend of hers, a great

amateur painter, at the Exhibition on the day on which it was to close, went to Somerset House at the time agreed on. But at the door Sophia's servant put a note into his hand, saying she feared that she could not come at all —certainly not for an hour after the time appointed. Lord Shirley however went in, that he might see his family picture for the last time in that place.

The room was very crowded, and the company not very select; but Lord Shirley, immersed in thought, was gazing fondly on the likeness of Catherine, when two vulgar-looking young men came and stood just before him; and as they evidently came to look at the picture, he was induced to listen to their remarks.

"Egad, Dick, 'tis very like her," said the one to the other; "the same demure look she always had, as if butter would not melt in her mouth."

"Yes, and I find she hums people now with her sanctification; but we know that when she chose to unbend, she was a fine funny girl—How she used to run on! To be sure she was always well-born; still I never thought Kitty Shirley would be a countess; I always thought Jack Lawson would get her at last."

"Ay, so did I, for he was devilish fond of her; and once when I said 'Kitty Shirley,' says I, 'is not as handsome neither as Lucy Merle,' I thought he would have knocked me down."

"Indeed! Well, they were both fine creatures. And how they used to like to walk in the streets and show themselves! You remember that Melvyn that followed them home once."

"Yes."

"Well, what do you think? If I did not see him come out of a shabby yard the other day with the countess,—I am sure it was she."

"Well, and what then? He was always after her, you know; and why should a countess be more coy than a private gentlewoman?"

"Right; and who should I see looking after them but Charlotte Wright,—you know whom I mean? 'Do you see them?' said she.—'They often meet in my room; goodness led them here first, but badness makes them continue their visits, and as they pay me well, it is no business of mine.'"

On hearing this, Lord Shirley could be contented to remain silent no longer; yet being inarticulate from strong emotion, a gentleman, as he appeared to be, came between the young men and the earl as he was about to seize the arm of one of them, and saying to them "What have you done? Lord Shirley has heard all you said;" the two youths pushed their way violently through the crowd, and though Lord Shirley followed them directly, he utterly lost sight of them. The truth was, the young men were creatures of Melvyn and tutored by him, he having learnt from Sophia the exact moment when Lord Shirley would be at the Exhibition; and they had little doubt but that he would go up stairs, even if she did not come. The seeming gentleman who interfered to tell the youths the exact moment when to escape, was also one of his tools; and he was well served by all three.

When Lord Shirley recovered himself, his first resolve was to go home and relate to Catherine all he had heard, and describe the persons of the speakers. He did so, to her amazement and consternation. Still, when she heard herself talked of under the name of *Kitty Shirley*, she could scarcely help giving way to laughter.

"My dear lord," said she, "this must have been what they call a *hoax;* for can you at any time of my life fancy me looking like a *Kitty Shirley*, or liable to be called so? Now do look at my solemn demure face, as the youth said, my Madonna hair, my tall person, and my erect not to say lofty carriage, and ask yourself whether it was ever likely I could be known by the name of Kitty Shirley."

"Why, indeed it seems improbable."

"Oh! depend on it these fellows knew you; and having heard some reports and some names, they made up this conversation in order to hoax you."

"But who is Jack Lawson?"

Catherine blushed, but said she knew no such person as Jack Lawson.

"And who is Charlotte Wright?"

"There is a woman of that name amongst the poor whom I visit." And when she said this, a dark cloud passed across Lord Shirley's brow.

"Then you see," said he, "in one name, nay, in two, they were right, for they were right in Melvyn's name. This is very strange, mysterious business!" And without taking any leave of Catherine he went out to see if Sophia Clermont was returned home. But in his way he met an express coming for him, to tell him that an old friend of his father's was dying, thirty miles from town, and wished to see him; and desiring the man to go and inform Lady Shirley, he mounted his horse to ride it as far as the first stage, and set off at full speed.

"And he is gone without returning for one moment to bid me farewell!" cried Catherine, when she heard of her lord's departure. "Time was when no consideration would have led him to do this! But I loved him too well; his image did sometimes steal between me and my Creator, and it is only right that I should be made to suffer in that by which I have offended."

It was Saturday evening, and Lady Shirley had promised to *chaperone* a young lady to the opera, on condition that she might consign her to the care of another lady at an early hour, as she always made a point of quitting the opera, on a Saturday night, before the last

ballet, that her servants and household might be in bed early enough to rise and get their work done time enough to go to church. This young lady, and the *chaperone* who came to replace Catherine, were both, unluckily for her, friends of Melvyn; and he consequently came into the box to speak to them. Catherine did not know how to act;—she could not bear to tell him that her lord was jealous of him, and beg him to go away, nor did she like to own to him that the censorious world had joined their names improperly.

It was now approaching eleven; and Catherine, who was really ill from the wretchedness of her mind, and to whom her lord's coldness and sudden departure were continually present, resolved to stay no longer; but, unfortunately, no one was in the box whom she could ask to convey her to her carriage but Melvyn, who, seeing her turn very pale, entreated to be allowed to look for her servants.

Catherine blushed with painful emotion, and faintly articulated, "No—I cannot think of troubling you."

"I see how it is," said Melvyn, lowering his voice, "Oh! Lady Shirley, are you aware how your reluctance to let me have the honour of conducting you to your carriage, flatters my self-love? Dear and respected lady, be more just to yourself, and do not let your health suffer from scruples and fears so unworthy of you."

Plausible as was this reasoning, Catherine at first was not influenced by it; but at length increasing indisposition obliged her to say that she would trouble him to call up her carriage; and till he returned, she sat back in the box, hiding her face, and complaining of a bad headache.

At length he returned; and, while leaning on his arm he led her through the as yet empty promenade, he knew that Sir Harry Turton, the curious young man who had watched Catherine into her house, was lounging in their path, and would probably follow them and observe their conduct, as his suspicions of their intimacy were fully awakened, and had been communicated to others. Melvyn was too well acquainted with the characters of those with whom he lived, and with human nature in general, to be frequently, if *ever*, wrong in his calculations; and he saw Sir Harry follow and watch them to the door. There, instead of her carriage, Lady Shirley found only Melvyn's servant, who said, if they would walk a little way, he would lead them to it, as it could not get up, and the way to it was clear and not dirty. Lady Shirley, who would not have felt rain nor heeded lightning, so much was her mind absorbed in her own wretchedness, and whose only desire was to get home and leave a scene so ill fitted to tranquillize a mind like hers, expressed her readiness to follow the man; but, after walking as far as Coventry Street, no carriage was to be seen, and the man expressed his belief that the coachman, being impatient, had driven down to the Opera House. Melvyn, seeing Sir Harry still in sight, asked Catherine what she would do, suggesting that it would be unpleasant to her probably, with only him for her escort, to go back and meet all the company coming out, and that it would therefore be better, perhaps, for them to walk on till they could meet a hackney-coach, into which he would put her, (his servant remaining with her,) and then go and find her carriage. Catherine consented to all he proposed, as she had a great terror of being seen by the company with him alone after all that had passed, and Lord Shirley's jealousy; and on they walked towards Grosvenor Square, Sir Harry still following. But the footman, having his cue from his master, dropped behind and left them, not unobserved by Sir Harry. It was now beginning to rain, and Lady Shirley had nothing on but a white lace veil. Melvyn therefore earnestly conjured her to let him borrow for her a hat and a shawl at a chamber-milliner's, whose door they were then passing, where he was well known; and Catherine leaned against the door-post while he went and borrowed a large straw bonnet and a thick shawl, which he assisted her to put on; and they then resumed their walk. All this Sir Harry saw, much to the delight of his curiosity; but, to do him justice, greatly to the distress of his better feelings.

At length they turned into one particular street, and Sir Harry's heart began to beat with violence; for he saw Melvyn direct his steps towards one side of the way. At this moment the rain fell violently; but the wicked man, the curious man, and the suffering woman were regardless of its violence. Catherine, indeed, from illness was now nearly past feeling, and her weakness made easy to her destroyer what he might otherwise have found difficult; namely, to execute his plan of getting her, in sight of a witness, the curious Sir Harry, into a *disreputable house.*

He had led her to the door, and was going to advise her resting for a moment in the house they were passing, which, he said, belonged to a friend of his, but who, with his family, was then in the country, when her feet failed her; and she sunk against his shoulder. Melvyn instantly rang the bell; the ready porter opened, and the door of infamy closed on the innocent Catherine. Melvyn had accomplished what he wished. Lady Shirley's pure fame was blasted, he trusted; and even her doting lord would believe the tale of her guilt after this appearance, and he had it in contemplation to confirm her frailty to the earl in a manner which he could not doubt. "And then," thought he, "Shirley is rendered miserable, she is lost to *him*, and I am amply revenged! Yes, Shirley, in one instance, at

least, you have not triumphed over me with impunity!"

Sir Harry, meanwhile, almost doubting the evidence of his senses, was still watching the door of the house, having first with some difficulty convinced himself that he had not mistaken the number; but he found that he had not, and his heart bled for the unhappy and injured husband.

It was long before Catherine recovered herself entirely; and when she did so, she was surprised to see that no woman waited on her, but that the wine and the water were brought by a man. But, vile as Melvyn was, he could not bear that a being so pure as Catherine should be waited upon or even exposed to the sight of the abandoned of her own sex.

It was near an hour before Catherine was well enough to be moved; and when she was so, at her earnest desire Melvyn went for a coach; while she remained in a very neat room, which by its appearance could excite no suspicions in her mind. When he went out he saw Sir Harry at a little distance, and in company with another gentleman. This was better and better for his designs; and having procured a coach by good luck which had just set down a fare, he came in it into the street, but desired it to draw up to one corner. He then let himself out; not at all doubting but that when he was re-entered into the house the spies would go and take the number of the coach. Catherine now gladly suffered Melvyn to lead her to the coach; and the two spies standing in a dark corner of the street near it, saw her enter it supported by Melvyn, whom she forbade to accompany her. And Melvyn having pretended to speak "Grosvenor Square" in a low voice, but loud enough to be overheard by the two gentlemen, ran hastily to Sophia Clermont's house to relate to her the complete success of all his stratagems.

The gentlemen who had witnessed this scene of apparent guilt were far from having such exulting feelings. The one who had joined Sir Harry, and had inquired what he was doing there, was a most respectable nobleman, the friend of Lord Shirley, just returned from an embassy, and who in consequence of his long absence from England had seen Catherine only twice, and then only in public. But the beauty of her figure, and that of her hand and arm, was so very striking, that any one who had once seen them could swear with safety to their identity wherever they were again beheld; and this beautiful hand and arm, by the pale light of a lamp, Lord M—— had seen ungloved resting on Melvyn's shoulder as he put her into the coach. This proof that he beheld Lady Shirley was not wanted; —still it satisfied Lord M—— yet more of her identity, and he believed that it was his duty to tell Lord Shirley what he had unwillingly witnessed. He also blamed Sir Harry for not showing himself, to prevent her entering the house. "Perhaps," said he, "she was innocent till then, though not in intention, and your appearance might have saved her from perdition!" But Sir Harry after what he had before seen was of a different opinion, and he brought Lord M—— over to be of the same opinion with himself.

When the hackney-coach reached Grosvenor Square, the man stopped, and desired to know where he was to set down. Catherine told him, at Lord Shirley's. And could she have seen his countenance, when, on her removing the hat and shawl, he saw by her dress and appearance that it was a lady whom he had taken up under such suspicious circumstances, she would have been perplexed to understand the expression of it. At length she saw herself at her own door, and the porter immediately answered the vulgar rap of the coachman.

"It is my lady, and in a hack!" cried the porter, while her own gentleman ran to assist her out of the coach.

"Burton, is the carriage returned yet?"

"No, my lady."

"I missed it strangely," said the unconscious Catherine as she got out; "one of you must go and say that I am come home."

The coachman gave a sort of hem, and looked sly. "My fare is seven shillings, my lady," said he.

"Seven shillings!" said Burton.

"Pay him what he asks," said Catherine, "it is a wet night."

The coachman concluded that she did this to prevent questions being asked, and he had asked double his fare, being sure that the sum would not be disputed. And Burton did as he was ordered; though wondering to see his lady come home alone and without a servant in such a vehicle, and holding a straw bonnet and a shawl in her hand.

"This was some charity scheme of hers, I'll lay my life," said Burton to the porter; for to suspect his lady, and such a lady, of any thing wrong would have been in Burton's eyes little better than sacrilege;—and the porter agreed with him. Catherine's maid was equally astonished, and equally candid, even though she saw the bonnet and shawl, and also the draggled state of her lady's clothes; but respect being banished by surprise, she exclaimed, "Dear me, my lady! where can you have been, and where did you get that vulgar hat and handkerchief?"

Catherine now recollected that some explanation was indeed necessary. And as she began to narrate what had happened, she saw that the tale she had to tell was so odd and so suspicious, especially as she must tell it also to a jealous husband, that she became confused; she hesitated, she turned pale; she broke off suddenly—and at last, complaining of great giddiness in her head, she threw herself on the sofa; there, though she did not

absolutely lose her senses, she lay for some time without the power of motion, and when she retired to bed, to sleep was she found impossible.

The next day she was a little relieved in mind by receiving a short though cold letter from Lord Shirley, and evidently written under suppressed feelings; and Catherine, who now saw every thing through a jaundiced eye, was but too conscious of the change in his style. But his letter conveyed one piece of information which was important and interesting to many persons from different causes. He announced in it his intention of returning the next day. In two days at most, then, Lord M—— knew that his must be the painful task of imparting to Lord Shirley the suspicious and damning circumstance which he had witnessed. Sophia and Melvyn knew that the last destroying blow was now about to be given to the reputation of Catherine and the peace of Lord Shirley. And Catherine knew, though pure even of intentional error, that she was going to appear under circumstances of a very suspicious nature before a jealous and irritated judge. Perhaps none of these parties slept well that night. But at length the dreaded, the desired, the eventful morrow arrived.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Lord Shirley reached London the next day about noon, having left the gentleman recovering to whom he had been summoned. But he had crossed Westminster Bridge before he had determined whether it would be better for him to go home first, or not see Lady Shirley till he had endeavoured by means of Miss Clermont to clear up to his satisfaction the suspicions infused into his mind by some of the strange conversation that he had overheard at Somerset House.

At length, however, he resolved to go to Sophia first, as he felt afraid of meeting the eye of Catherine till he could gaze on her again with pleasure, and make her amends for having left her without one single adieu, by returning to her with renewed confidence and unabated affection. He found Sophia at home and alone, and not a little pleased to find that he had come to her before he went to see Catherine. But she soon found that it was jealousy of his wife, not regard for her, that led him to her, and the thought steeled her heart against his evident distress.

Lord Shirley, unable to disclose to any one a conversation that inculpated and degraded Catherine, which what he had overheard most certainly did, asked Sophia with an air of assumed indifference, whether she had heard the name of the street in which Melvyn's stable-keeper lived, and of the mews whence the countess and Melvyn were seen coming out. Sophia named both, having heard them from Sir Harry Turton. Lord Shirley soon after made an excuse for leaving her, and resolved to satisfy his mind by going in search of Charlotte Wright. Charlotte Wright was well known, and her apartment soon found; but she was not within, being, as a little girl informed him, gone to visit a poor family higher up the stairs.

"I will follow her thither," said Lord Shirley, "I dare say I shall be able to find her." And as he spoke he ascended the stairs; for he recollected that Melvyn visited one family on the staircase, and perhaps Charlotte was gone to them.

He was quite correct in his conjecture; and on asking for one Charlotte Wright, she answered from an adjoining room, and opened the door. The persons were so like the description which Catherine had given, that Lord Shirley had no doubt he was right; and he asked Charlotte if this was the family whom Mr. Melvyn visited.

Charlotte, who was prepared for this visit by Melvyn, and also *for* questions, and *with* answers, replied in the affirmative. But the poor sick man observed, "Yes, the gentleman to be sure was very good; but since that sweet young lady has not come to see neighbour Smith, he has not come near me."

"What young lady?"

"Oh! a young lady, a countess, I believe," said Charlotte, lowering her voice; "but I cannot talk about her here, nor indeed at all."

"Oh, such a sweet lady!" cried the wife, "I am sure I should not wonder if all the world came to look at her; and yet, though the gentleman might come oftener on her account, he came at first without knowing that she was here."

"Ay, wife; you are ready enough to speak up for the gentleman, for he is a handsome gentleman, that's the truth on it; and so the lady thought, for I sha'nt forget how she smiled upon him and called him her good friend."

Lord Shirley started, and thought he had no more business in that room. Therefore, putting a dollar in the wife's hand, and telling Charlotte that his business was with her, he led the way down stairs with that *serrement de cœur* which jealousy alone can give.

When he reached Charlotte's humble room, he closed the door, and asked her if she had really uttered the words which the young men had repeated. And Charlotte, affecting to be confused, and to hesitate, said that she was afraid to speak, for fear she should get anger from Mr. Melvyn; and to be sure she must say he paid her well,—but—"

"Paid you for what?"

"Dear me! your honour speaks so sharp, you frighten me.—Why, you see, when the lady and Mr. Melvyn came down from seeing the poor folks up stairs, they used to come in here; and you know, sir, though we poor folks are poor, we are neither blind nor deaf; and I soon saw that those grandees liked to be together, and so I used to leave them."

"What! here?"

"Yes."

"Distraction!" cried Lord Shirley, and rushed out of the room like a madman; but coming back to the door, he said, "Well, woman, go on."

"Lord! your honour, why should you take on so? I am sure I meant to insinuate nothing improper; I dare say, madam 's as innocent as I am."

Lord Shirley looked at her fiercely, and the word "Strumpet!" almost burst from his lips. —"Go on," he cried.

"Well, sir; at last the neighbours did not like the look of it, and they said I must not let the grandees come into my room; and so I told them, and they took it very kindly; and so, after staying only a little while up stairs with the poor folks, to what they used to do, they used to walk away together, but where they went to, I can't pretend for to say."

"There," said Lord Shirley, throwing her some money, "there!" and darted down the street.

"But can this be real?" said he to himself, "Is not this woman a suborned witness?—*Suborned* by whom, and for what? It were madness to suppose it;—and that she likes Melvyn and dotes upon his conversation I well know—To be sure, their intercourse might not be criminal; no, I am sure it was not; I am not yet so cursed as to believe it was;—and yet should I have judged so favourably of any other woman?"

During this time the earl was walking towards home; but when he caught sight of his own house, he started as if he had seen a basilisk, and directed his steps towards Sophia Clermont's.

Catherine meanwhile was vainly expecting her lord's return; and as she hoped that he would have come home before he went anywhere else, after his first absence from her of three whole days, she concluded that he was not returned; but this conclusion was, she found, only too soon wholly erroneous, when she received the following note from the duchess of C——.

"Finding your lord is returned, as the duke saw him at Miss Clermont's door to-day, I beg you both to dine here at five, and accompany the duke and me to a private box at Covent Garden. AMELIA C——."

A mist came over Catherine's eyes as soon as she read this note; and though she was incapable of feeling jealousy, she owned in the bitterness of her heart that she had never known poignant anguish till that overwhelming moment! But even here, her habitual piety soon came to her aid; and feeling that in proportion to her misery ought to be her resignation, if her faith were really such as she had endeavoured to make it, she sought for support under her sufferings where alone it could be obtained; and "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!" burst from her quivering lips, and calmed her perturbed soul. But how should she answer the note of the duchess? And after much perplexity she wrote as follows:

"I shall leave Lord Shirley to answer for himself, my dear duchess; but I am not at all fit to go to the play this evening, and must decline the pleasure of accompanying you."

Lord Shirley, however, did not return to be told of the invitation to the play; and Catherine's wretchedness increased every hour. Unfortunately too, the General called, and asked her how the earl was after his hurried journey.

"I have not seen him yet," replied Catherine.

"Not seen him! Has he not been home?"

"No."

"Not home! when the duke of C—— told me that he saw him at Sophia Clermont's door!"

The General said no more, for he saw Catherine turn pale; and he well knew that, whatever she felt, this was a subject which her strong sense of a wife's duty would forbid her to talk upon; but to remain with her and see her suffering without expressing his sympathy with her sufferings, he felt to be impossible; therefore, affectionately pressing her cold hand, he said, "Good-day to you, my dear child!" and hastily left the room.

The General had for some time past been jealous of the earl's visits to Sophia Clermont; and now his fears being confirmed in a most painful degree, he went home with his mind violently irritated against Lord Shirley, and his open neglect, as he thought, of even common decorum. It was therefore with no very complacent feelings that he heard, after he had been home a short time, Lord Shirley himself announced. But there was a look of such misery in the earl's countenance, that it instantly softened the General's heart in his favour; and extending his hand to him, he said, "For mercy's sake, Lionel, tell me what has happened to you?" Lord Shirley wrung the hand he offered in silence, and burst into tears; while the General anxiously and impatiently awaited his communications.

Lord Shirley had returned again to Sophia Clermont's door, but had not resolution to go in and impart to her such strong evidence against the fame if not the virtue of his wife,

especially as he knew that she would by manner, if not by words, insinuate that she thought her guilty to the fullest extent. "No," thought he, "I will not put her, fallen as she is, in the power of an envious woman; but, as my mind will be upset if I have no confidant and adviser, I will go and state every circumstance to one to whom her honour and reputation are as dear as to myself;" and he instantly went in search of the General. But when he had recovered his agitation at first seeing him, he was wholly at a loss for words to begin his narration; and the General said impatiently, "Well, it is lucky for me that I have only this moment parted with Catherine, else your emotion would alarm me still more than it does, for I should think it concerned her."

"And so it does concern her; she is the cause, the sole cause, of the misery you behold."

"By being your wife, my lord?" asked the General sternly, "and thereby preventing your marrying another? for I know not else how Catherine Shirley should make the misery of her husband."

"I don't understand you," replied the earl indignantly; "if Lady Shirley be as irreproachable a wife as I have been a husband, my misery will soon be at an end."

"If she be an irreproachable wife!"

"Yes, I did say so; and I beg to be allowed to relate to you some circumstances which warrant the expression."

"Oh, pray relate them," answered the General with a sneer; "they must be convincing, no doubt."

The earl immediately, but with great hesitation and confusion, confessed his long jealousy of Melvyn, and the indiscreet, indecorous, if not criminal conduct, by which Catherine had increased his suspicions till they amounted *almost* to certainty.

The General listened with motionless astonishment and indignation. At length he exclaimed, "This must be a base conspiracy against your wife, my lord, founded on her want of knowledge of the world, and on that rash innocence which, conscious of its own incorruptibility, disregards appearances.—These people are vile agents of viler employers; an artful man and a disappointed woman—My lord, my lord, I tremble, I shudder to think that you must be either their dupe or their assistant in this bad business."

"Assistant!" cried the earl, starting up, every fibre trembling with indignant passion; "You cannot, General Shirley, nay, you dare not believe it!"

"My lord, you dare believe, and even tell me you think my granddaughter an adulteress, a fact full as improbable as that her husband should be leagued with a male and female profligate to take away her reputation."

"Sir," replied the earl, "I came to you for consolation and comfort. But—"

"And, my lord, if my suspicions really wrong you, you have found both; for I have told you these appearances against Lady Shirley, which are I own extremely strong, are nothing more than the result of a base conspiracy against her fame and peace."

"But why should the persons in question conspire against her?"

"Why are persons ever vicious, my lord?—But I see, sir, that you wish, spite of what you say, and no doubt from private motives of your own, to believe what you have heard; and as that is the case, I will not stay in your presence longer than to assure you that I shall at any time be willing to receive Lady Shirley to my arms and my protection, whenever her husband thinks proper to abandon her." Then rushing into another room he left Lord Shirley offended but relieved;—for the General might be right—Melvyn and Sophia might be actuated by motives of revenge;—but yet it was impossible, for Melvyn must know that he risked his life; and though it might be worth a lover's while to risk life for the possession of the woman he loved, yet surely it could not be for the mere appearance of having obtained it. Still the love, the devoted love, he bore to Catherine, made him resolve to give the General's opinion all the weight possible; and while it predominated over his mind, he had the resolution to return home.

Catherine was alone when he entered, and so overcome at seeing him, that instead of running to meet him, she sunk on a chair beside her, and pale as death awaited his approach.

"Whence," said Lord Shirley to himself, "whence springs this strong emotion? Could any thing less than conscious guilt produce it?" And his manner became as cold as possible. "How are you, Lady Shirley?" said he, just touching her cheek with his lips.

"How *am* I?" she returned; "O, Shirley! how can I be otherwise than miserable?"

"If miserable, you have no one to blame but yourself.—Does not your conscience accuse you of much that even the most indulging husband must think deserving reprobation?"

"It does; but not enough to excuse your past and present coldness; not enough to justify your going to the house of another before you came home to see me."

Lord Shirley could not listen to that touching and now mournful voice, without feeling his heart insensibly attracted towards her, and his suspicions diminished; and to conceal the extent of his emotion he turned into the inner drawing-room.

At this moment Moore, Lady Shirley's maid, opened the door of the front room, and said, "My lady, Mr. Melvyn has sent for the

bonnet and shawl he borrowed for you last night."

"What!—what is that?" cried the earl coming forward.

"Only—my lord,—a bonnet and shawl—" said Moore, frightened at her lord and for her lady.

"I will explain," said Catherine in a faint voice; and trembling with emotion from the probable result of what she was forced thus abruptly to communicate, "I was forced to walk from the opera last night, and with Mr. Melvyn, and he was so good as to borrow for me—"

Lord Shirley waited to hear no more; but darting at her a look fierce and terrible with reproach and indignation, he ran down stairs and locked himself into his study to consider what was to be done. But his own gentleman knocked loudly for admittance, telling him that he had a note to deliver from Lord M—— which required an immediate answer; and Lord Shirley reluctantly admitted him.

"My dear Lord, (wrote Lord M——) I conjure you to come to my house on the receipt of this—I have only now ascertained the fact of your being returned. It is necessary for *your own sake* that you and I should have some serious conversation on a matter that most nearly and dearly concerns you and all most dear to you. Your sincere and faithful friend, M——."

"This must concern my wife," thought Lord Shirley; and for a moment he dreaded hearing any thing to confirm his wretchedness beyond doubt; but the next minute he thought certainty better than suspense, and reached Lord M——'s house even sooner than the messenger did. He found Lord M—— alone, and saw that he felt some strong emotion at seeing him; while the former discovered from the hurry and agitation depicted on Lord Shirley's countenance, that what he had to communicate was probably not unexpected by him.

Lord M—— was a man of strong sense and strong prejudices, and he thought it wrong in a woman to be remarkable for any thing, beauty excepted; but the reputation of extraordinary virtue or piety was to him almost as offensive as of extraordinary talents or extraordinary impudence. Nay, to dare to be extraordinary in any thing, was being impudent in his eyes; and what he considered as the assumption of superior sanctity in Lady Shirley had greatly prejudiced his mind against her. Your true *system-monger* is rarely deeply hurt at any thing that proves the truth of his theory; and spite of his regard for Lord Shirley, spite of the real kindness of his nature, he had contemplated with a little self-complacency the saintly Lady Shirley coming out of a house of bad repute.

But this was an unworthy tribute, exacted of his better feelings by his self-love; and every sensation, but of pity for his sufferings past, present, and to come, was annihilated in the heart of Lord M—— when the earl entered his apartment. "Shirley," said Lord M—— squeezing his hand affectionately, "I loved your father dearly, and I love his son; love him for his father's sake and his own too!"

"My dear lord, I never doubted your regard."

"Nor did I send for you now to assure you of it. But as I think that nothing but strong regard and strong intimacy can justify the liberty I am going to take—"

"Oh! no apologies, but come to the point at once." And as he spoke, Lord Shirley held his hand to his head, which literally throbbed with the agony of expectation.

"Well then, Shirley;—I was abroad when you married; and I returned to hear at first only of your happiness, and the virtue, nay piety, of your countess."

"*At first!*—I understand you; go on."

"But lately,—tell me, my dear friend,—have you ever had cause to suspect Lady Shirley's affections were alienated from you?"

"I have."

"But not that a loss of virtue had been the consequence?"

"What makes you ask?" answered Lord Shirley, turning pale as death.

"If you wish it, you shall hear."

"Go on; I am prepared now for any thing."

But he deceived himself; for when Lord M—— entered into the whole minute detail of what he had himself seen in addition to what Sir Harry Turton had witnessed, the wretched husband leaned his head on the table in a degree of misery, of certain, of hopeless misery, to which all his preceding agonies had been nothing in comparison. When he was more composed he desired to see Sir Harry Turton, who was waiting below stairs; and he immediately obeyed the summons.

Lord Shirley listened with tolerable patience to the recital Sir Harry gave, till he mentioned the bonnet and shawl which Melvyn had borrowed; and then he started up, saying, "The rascal sent for these very things just now when I was with her; and she told me that he had borrowed them for her to walk home with from the Opera!"

"Of the fact as far as appearances go, my dear lord, there wanted no confirmation; all that remains unproved is the criminality of the parties; and—"

"Surely," cried Sir Harry, "Melvin's sending openly for the things he borrowed was very impudent; and Lady Shirley's owning that she had walked home with him, was very impudent also, if they were both conscious of great guilt."

"I was thinking the same," said Lord Shir-

ley faintly. "But then the house—you are sure it was a bad house?"

"Quite sure," replied Sir Harry.

"But did he not decoy her into it, think ye, on some false pretence?"

"Is it likely?" replied Lord M——. "Melvyn's character has hitherto been unblemished!—My dear lord," he continued, "though I love Sir Harry's candour, and pity your desperate wish of trusting to it, I must say that Lady Shirley remained in the house some time; and when she came out she leaned very contentedly on Melvyn, and they evidently parted on good terms."

"Is there then no hope, no doubt?" cried Lord Shirley, throwing himself on the sofa in such a paroxysm of misery as nearly threatened to overturn his reason; while Lord M—— looked on in silent and powerless sympathy, and Sir Harry cried like a child.

"Come, tell me; what is to be done?" cried Lord Shirley, at length starting up. "Shall we go to the General? I trust he will be convinced now!—But no, my first business is with Melvyn. Lord M——, go to him, you know what to say; you will be my second?"

"No doubt; but Sir Harry had better go with me, should he ask on what grounds of suspicion you proceed."

"Undoubtedly." And the two gentlemen departed, leaving Lord Shirley to 'meditate e'en to madness.'

Melvyn was at home, expecting to receive some message from Lord Shirley; and thinking that Lord M—— or Sir Harry Turton would be the bearer of it, his plan of action was already laid. As soon as the gentlemen appeared, he courteously demanded to what fortunate circumstance he owed the honour of a visit from Lord M——. And when Lord M—— said that he waited on him from Lord Shirley, he affected to look confused and to act astonishment. But when Lord M—— explained his business, he acted indignation, and desired to know what ground Lord Shirley had for such unwarrantable insinuations. But when Lord M—— and Sir Harry both declared what they had seen, and what Lord M—— thought it his duty to communicate to the injured husband, he affected to be excessively overcome; and falling back in his chair and covering his face with his hands, he murmured out "Dear creature! how will she support this trial!" And for some moments he was silent.

"We cannot stay here, sir," said Lord M—— haughtily, "to witness your regrets for the disclosure of a crime which one grain of principle would have prevented you from committing. But I desire to know what I am to tell Lord Shirley."

"This, my lord;—that I cannot, will not add to my guilt, by lifting my hand against the life of Lord Shirley. No, my lord, I have injured him too much already; and no consideration will force me to give him the meeting he desires."

"Is this your last resolve, Mr. Melvyn? and will you, on this paltry pretence, dare to deny Lord Shirley the only satisfaction he can receive? for the grounds are not, I fear, sufficient for a divorce."

"My lord, whatever be the motives to which you and the world may impute my refusal to fight Lord Shirley, I shall still persevere in it. I will not run the risk of murdering the man I have dishonoured."

"This sounds prettily, sir," said Lord M——; "and we will report what you say faithfully to Lord Shirley."

They did so; and worked his noble and indignant mind up to a state of frenzy by the narration.

"And does he *own* the fact," exclaimed Lord Shirley, "as if he *gloried* in it? And does he make a merit of letting me live after having dishonoured me? But he shall fight me still, if he has one atom of spirit." So saying, he rushed down stairs, Lord M—— and Sir Harry following him as fast as they could, and went to Melvyn's house.

CHAPTER XXV.

Few persons were so well read as this man in the human heart, and the natural course of human motives and human actions. He foresaw the chance there was of a visit from Lord Shirley, and he had prepared for it. Lord Shirley knocked at the door violently; and as soon as it opened he asked whether Mr. Melvyn was within. The servant said "Yes." On which the earl rushed past him, before Lord M—— and Sir Harry Turton had entered the hall. Lord Shirley found Melvyn, though it was near the end of a hot June, sitting by a fire; but that fire had evidently been only just lighted for the sake of burning papers; and this Melvyn was in the act of doing as Lord Shirley entered the room.

On seeing him, Melvyn attempted to seize a note that lay at a little distance; but Lord Shirley recognising Catherine's hand, tore it from his grasp, and read the following words:

"All will soon be discovered, I fear; but be on your guard; I mean to assert my innocence to the last. The bonnet and shawl were a sad mistake. In haste; but wholly yours,

"C. S——."

It seemed as if every fresh proof of Catherine's guilt had been preceded in Lord Shirley's mind by some fresh conviction of her in-

nocence, with such unabated acuteness of suffering did he appear to receive each different successive evidence of the truth of his suspicions.

"Sir," said he at length, "I came to *insist* on your meeting me."

"I will not."

"Base, dishonourable seducer!"

"I am not a seducer, my lord," interrupted Melvyn. "I should not have dared to think of Lady Shirley improperly, had I not been privy by accident to the secret of the man on the balcony."

"*Coward!*" At this word Melvyn looked fierce.

"Yes, coward! and even your wretched victim will despise you as I do!"

"My lord, I cannot bear this, and I will meet you," replied Melvyn. "I am no coward; but I have injured you so much already—!"

Here he stopped, and turned very pale, retreating some paces; for Lord Shirley, irritated to fury, advanced as if about to strike him with his muscular and powerful arm. But Lord M—— withheld him.

"Wretch! name your time and place," vociferated Lord Shirley.

"Six o'clock this evening, behind Chalk Farm."

"Agreed." And his companions bore away the agitated earl between them; and calling a coach, conveyed him in a most terrible state of mind back to Lord M——'s house.

"Have you any worldly affairs to settle, Shirley?" said Lord M——.

"None. My will has been made ever since the birth of my children; and I will not alter it, though it was made in order to show my boundless love and confidence in——. Yet I must alter it in one respect. I cannot leave my children to the care of an unprincipled mother, you know; that part of it I must alter; and I shall leave them, dear Lord M——, to your guardianship. Give me pen and paper immediately."

Accordingly, he wrote the addition or codicil he wished; and having had it signed by proper witnesses, he declared that he had nothing more to do. "You will find," said he, "if I fall, how magnificently I have provided for her who has destroyed me. And I think she will learn to feel that I deserved a kinder return. And, Oh! God grant that the feeling may lead her to timely remorse and penitence! Tell, Lord M——, tell her what I now say to you; and also tell her, that I forgive—no, no, not yet, not yet—I fear I cannot forgive her yet."

At length it was time to set off for Chalk Farm; and Sir Harry, having ordered a surgeon to attend, took his own station near enough to be on the spot as soon as all was over, while the two lords proceeded to the place of rendezvous. They found Melvyn with a friend of his already there; and Lord M—— lost no time in measuring the ground. "Mr. Melvyn," said he, "as Lord Shirley is the challenger, you fire first." Melvyn took his ground, and the pistol offered him; but instantly discharged it in the air. "Now, my lord, I am ready to receive your fire," said he; "but I swear that I will not take aim at you."

"Nay, this is trifling," cried Lord M——; while Lord Shirley vainly endeavoured to speak.

"Trifling or not, it is my last and solemn resolve," he replied. And Lord Shirley with great effort exclaiming, "I cannot be your butcher," threw down his pistol, and rushed with frenzied speed from the scene of action. Sir Harry saw him coming, and took his unresisting arm; but he forbore to question him; and Lord M——, who soon overtook them, told him what had passed:

"This conduct of his will make his peace with some," said Lord M——; "but as he has never given any proof of courage, I suspect that cowardice and not compunction, is the cause of his acting thus; and I could almost find in my heart to affront him myself, in order to see whether I am right or not."

It was now some time before any thing could draw Lord Shirley from the deep and gloomy abstraction into which he had fallen. At last, however, Lord M——, alarmed at the state he was in, asked him what he meant to do with Lady Shirley; and whether it was not right that she should be informed directly of what had happened. At mention of Catherine, Lord Shirley started, and burst into a violent agony of tears; which, by relieving him, also relieved the apprehensions of Lord M——. But the next moment he suddenly started up, and declared that his wife was innocent, and that the whole was a base conspiracy against her fame; and that he would hasten to her immediately, and implore her forgiveness for having dared to suspect her; declaring that, such had always been the purity and piety of her life, it was easier to believe the whole world leagued against her, than that such a being could ever fall from virtue.

"Well, then, my lord," coldly and almost sneeringly replied Lord M——, "then take Lady Shirley to your heart again. If you can only *think* her innocent, she is so, to you at least. And if you are but happy, no matter that the world considers you in the light of a complaisant and contented husband.—'You 'll find not Cassio's kisses on her lips.'"

"Distraction!" cried Lord Shirley, starting in agony from his seat. "But remember, Lord M——," he indignantly added, "that Othello found at last that Desdemona was innocent, and the victim of a base conspiracy.—Men have been villains, my lord."

"True, and women unchaste."

"But not such women as my wife, Lord M——. No, it is impossible that a creature so self-governed, so modest, so pious, should thus suddenly, without provocation, have plunged into such depravity! I cannot believe it; every action of her life gives the lie to such a possibility."

"Then I conclude," coolly answered Lord M——, "that no mystery, or secret, ever attached to the conduct of Lady Shirley?"

Lord Shirley started, and replied in a faltering accent, "Yes, both—both, my lord;—there always was a mystery, and a secret."

"Ay, and a man, a handsome young man in the balcony."

"True, true;" *and elsewhere*, he was about to add; but he recollected that the suspicious circumstance which happened at his country-seat was known to no one but himself; and a mixture of tenderness towards Catherine, of shame, and of wretchedness, prevented his disclosure of it. But the recollection of it now operated powerfully against his rising conviction of his wife's innocence, and Lord M—— continued thus:

"Then, pray tell me, Lord Shirley, how you can reconcile these circumstances with the pure, and upright, and ingenuous line of conduct which always distinguished Lady Shirley?"

"Lady Shirley assured me that she was bound by a solemn oath not to explain the suspicious circumstances which alarmed me; but that she was trying to obtain absolution from her oath, and that then I should know all; adding, that in the meanwhile I knew that no consideration had power enough to make her break a vow pledged to her God."

"Exemplary piety!" replied Lord M—— sneeringly. "And you were its easy dupe! So this pious lady was in the habit of making vows, was she? under the sanction of which she allowed herself to be so mysterious and secret as to injure her own fame, and destroy her husband's peace!—And she must not, forsooth, undergo the common fate of other women, and be suspected of common frailty, although she involves herself in suspicious circumstances, merely because she is a professor of uncommon piety!—And she, who is thus wantonly calling on the name of God, cannot, to be sure, be believed capable of error with man? My lord, my lord, of all sinners, the most odious to me is a religious sinner."

"And to me too," replied Lord Shirley. "And could I really believe Lady Shirley guilty, she would be to me the worst of sinners, one sinning under the garb of sanctity. But will you not allow that much stress is always to be laid on weight of character?"

"Much; particularly where the accused person is a simple natural character, and does not affect to be over-righteous. But let me ask you, whether you ever knew a woman accused of improper conduct, without her having, by some imprudence, deserved it? Can you say, even were Lady Shirley innocent of the great crime laid to her charge, that she had not deserved to be suspected by her imprudence?"

"My lord," replied Lord Shirley, hastily rising, "I cannot argue, I can only feel, and my feelings are most wretched."

At length, after running the melancholy round of his thoughts; after calling to mind the general grounds on which he could acquit, and the particular details on which he must convict Catherine; after listening, too, in purturbed silence, to Lord M——'s alternate arguments and cutting sarcasms; Lord Shirley, with a convinced head but a doubting heart, desired Lord M—— to advise him how to act, and to tell him how he had best make known to Lady Shirley that they were separated for ever.

"Now, my lord, you act like a man, and we will consult together on what is best to be done." Lord Shirley then, after a severe struggle with himself, said that he wished them to wait on the General, and tell him that Lord Shirley requested him to take Lady Shirley to his house, and inform her that she and her lord could never meet again; though for want of legal proof he could not attempt to procure a divorce.

The gentlemen did as they were desired; and, to the consternation and astonishment of the General, declared to him every particular.

"Gentlemen," cried the General after a few minutes' silence, "I have never wished for lengthened life till this moment; and now I heartily desire it, that I may live to see vengeance overtake the diabolical authors of this base conspiracy against the honour and fame of the most perfect of her sex; a being as innocent as she is unfortunate! By Heaven! she is another Desdemona!" he added, bursting into tears; "but I will take care that she shall not die like her, though she must suffer like her."

"And is it possible, General," asked Lord M——, "that you can still think Lady Shirley injured?"

"Ay, my lord; for it is much more easy for me to fancy Melvyn a deep designing, though undetected, unsuspected villain, than for me to believe that a woman of the most regular, virtuous and pious habits—one, too, who loved her husband almost to enthusiasm, could all at once become not only an adulteress, but a hardened, barefaced sinner, and accompany her betrayer to the very temple of vice. Do not suppose that I shall be satisfied without inquiring much further into this business; and when I have conducted Lady Shirley hither, I shall beg leave to see you here, gentlemen, that you may hear her story. At present you must excuse me, for it is my duty to

hasten to my injured child directly." And on this they withdrew; and the General ordered his carriage, which in a few minutes conveyed him to Grosvenor Square.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Catherine meanwhile was a prey to the most violent apprehensions relative to the safety of her lord; and much as he abhorred duelling, she was afraid that he had gone out, maddened by jealousy, in search of Melvyn. But had this been the case, she thought that some tidings of the event must ere then have reached her; and it was now past the hour of dinner, and yet Lord Shirley was not returned. Wretched, perplexed, yet still supported by that firm reliance on Providence which never deserted her, she had dismissed her unconscious children to the nursery, and had resumed her station at the window, to watch for the coming of that being who had, she feared, been only too dear to her,—when she saw the General drive up to her door in his carriage; and as he usually came on foot, she instantly apprehended that he was sent to announce to her some terrible intelligence.

The General slowly ascended the stairs, meaning to affect the calmness which he did not feel; but the moment he beheld the woeworn but innocent face of Catherine, all his assumed fortitude forsook him, and catching her to his bosom he wept over her the tears of agonized affection.

"I see," said Catherine, "I have something terrible to learn; but believe me, that the hours of dreadful suspense which I have undergone, have also been hours of preparation; and I trust that I shall be able to endure whatever trials are assigned me."

"Trials indeed! my child," said the General; then added in a firmer voice, "Lady Shirley, this is no longer a home for you; and I am come to take you to my house."

"Ha!" exclaimed Catherine, catching his arm wildly. "Is it indeed so? Am I deserted?"

"Deserted! Yes—and you have lost your husband's esteem and confidence, and your reputation!"

"But as I am so entirely innocent, I cannot lose them."

"No! poor deluded victim! Know, then, that though I believe you spotless as an angel, your husband looks upon you as a vile adulteress, and rejects you from his home and his heart!"

"Impossible! appearances may be against me, but they must disappear before the light of truth."

"But when?"

"Oh! let Mr. Melvyn and myself be instantly confronted with our accusers! Let them hear our honest explanation of every suspicious circumstance!"

"My dearest child, this Melvyn, to whom you would appeal, himself confirms the truth of the whole accusation, and has owned to Lord Shirley that he has really dishonoured him!"

"Is it possible that there exists such a villain!" exclaimed the wretched Catherine.—"Yet, merciful in thy inflictions, gracious Being!" she added, lifting her tearless eyes to heaven, "thou hast made me derive comfort from the conviction that my beloved husband has been misled by artifice the most specious and highly wrought. Oh! believe me," she added, "my mind is much relieved; for, clever as this vile man is, it is impossible that he can be always on his guard; and I think, when he is confronted with me, that he and his accomplices will find even their falsehood and cunning no match for truth and innocence like mine!"

"Well; far be it from me," said the General, "to destroy the hope that supports thee, darling. But come, let us hasten from this accursed house."

"Accursed! O fy! No, I shall bless it ever! But I may take my children with me, no doubt?"

"I shall certainly," said the General, "not wait for leave to take them." And ringing the bell, he desired that the children might be brought down, and that the nurses with their clothes should follow to his house.

The fortitude of Catherine, great as it was, sunk under the trial of quitting her house as a condemned adulteress; and it was with great difficulty that she could conceal her anguish from the curious and anxious eyes of the servants who were waiting in the hall.

When Catherine reached New Street, she was in such a state of weakness and dejection that she was forced to go to bed directly, spite of the extreme wish she felt to write a letter to her husband, desiring to be heard before she was judged and punished; and it was with great reluctance she admitted that such a task it was as yet beyond her powers to achieve. But though calumniated, driven from her home, discarded by her husband, and no doubt about to be an outcast from the world; supported by the consciousness of innocence, and secure in the protection of that Being in whom she trusted, the slumbers of Catherine even on that distressing night were soft, unbroken, and refreshing, like those of the innocent babes who slept beside her; and she arose in the morning calm and resigned, though tenderly alive to the consciousness that she was probably for ever parted from the husband whom she yet fervently loved.

Her first care when she awoke was to write to the earl. And had he been allowed to read what she wrote, it is probable that he might

have been induced to believe the possibility of a conspiracy existing against her. But Catherine's hand-writing threw him into such an agitation, that Lord M——, who had not the least doubt of her guilt, and thought that reading her letter would only needlessly distress the earl, advised its being returned unread. And the anguish which this unexpected severity inflicted on Catherine, destroyed at once the composure to which a night of rest had restored her. She then insisted on seeing Lord M—— and Sir Harry Turton, and they obeyed the summons.

Contrary to the expectations of both, and to the wish of one, Catherine received them with such an open steadfast eye, such a calm dignity of carriage, and such a lofty unembarrassd mien, that, spite of their prepossessions, a conviction of her unsullied purity, momentarily at least, forced itself upon their minds; and Lord M—— was obliged to remember that the arm of dazzling beauty, which now confined her floating drapery, when he last saw it, leaned upon the shoulder of the man who issued with her from the abode of guilt.

They had not been seated long before the General, in Catherine's name, demanded of the baronet first, and then of the peer, the same detail again which they had given him the day before. But when, in addition to that, Lord M—— produced the note which Lord Shirley had declared to be Catherine's hand-writing, this new proof how far human depravity could go in order to effect the destruction of an unoffending fellow-creature, filled her with horror and consternation.

"See," said she to the General, "how like to my hand-writing! I could almost have sworn to it myself!"

"I see no resemblance at all, child," said the General pettishly; "and those only who wish to see a resemblance, your own noble, generous, candid, self excepted, could ever have seen any for a moment."

"Well, my lord," said Catherine, smiling, "as you are prepared by this note for my obstinate assertion of my innocence to the last moment, I feel that I may assert for ever, and you will disbelieve me for ever. Yet still I think it my duty to assert, and I call on God to witness the assertion, that the new-born babe is not more innocent than I am, in thought, word, or deed, against the honour of my beloved husband! and that it is my firm conviction, that although for wise purposes the guilty are permitted at present to triumph over the innocent, in due time they will reap the reward of their wickedness, and the purity they have blasted will be made manifest to the world. I probably shall not live to see that day, because I feel (laying her hand to her heart,) I feel here that the decisive blow is struck; but my children will live to see their mother's fame cleared, and to avenge me of my enemies by pitying and forgiving them!"

Sir Harry was visibly affected by this address; but Lord M——, still operated upon by his system, coldly added, that even her asseverations would weigh nothing against facts; and he concluded that her ladyship would not attempt to disprove the evidence brought against her.

"I can't deny that I walked from the Opera with Mr. Melvyn; that, because it rained, he borrowed for me a hat and shawl; that in a street, the name of which is unknown to me, I became so ill that he pressed me to take shelter and sit down for a few minutes in the house of a friend of his; but as he said this, I heard no more distinctly, as I was seized with giddiness and a singing in my ears; and when I recovered my recollection I found myself in a neat room, and attended by Mr. Melvyn and a young man, who was holding a glass of water to my mouth; and in about half an hour after, Mr. Melvyn left me, to go and seek for a coach.—Now you tell me this house was a vile one; but I beseech you let this young man be called, and let him be confronted with me!"

"This request shall be complied with," said the General.

"It ought to be," said Sir Harry; "and I will undertake to bring the man hither."

He then departed on his task; and even Lord M—— owned that this step was a very proper one.

Sir Harry returned with the person in question, even sooner than was expected. But much as he evidently wished to have Lady Shirley proved innocent, it was clear when he appeared that nothing satisfactory had transpired. That was indeed impossible, as the waiter was an old tool of Melvyn's, and he was prepared what to answer. Still, when Catherine fixed her dark eyes on him, as if she would read his soul, he shrunk from her earnest gaze, and evidently changed colour.

"Yes, yes,—'tis he, it is the very same man I saw in that house," said Catherine. "And now I conjure you, sir, to answer me, as you shall answer at the dread day of judgment, whether, when you saw me in the house you belonged to, you took me for an abandoned woman!"

"What else could I take you for, my lady? —No others come there."

Catherine started at these words, as they convinced her that she only saw a being prepared to witness against her; and darting at him a look of indignant reproach, she ceased to pursue her hopeless interrogatories.

"Why do you not go on with your questions?" said Lord M——.

"Because I see that this man is bribed to witness against me."

"Bribed! my lady—I scorn your words."

"Ay, well you may; for you know that I am powerless against you. But what have I more to ask? Nothing; for, even if this per-

son had been with us all the time we stayed in the house, he could say that he was not."

"And was he not with you all the time?" asked the General.

"No, sir," hastily interrupted the man; "I left them when my lady recovered, and certainly I saw no more of them till the coach came, and Mr. Melvyn handed madam out."

"Enough; you may go," cried Catherine. And when the man was gone, she mournfully added, "Did you, my dear grandfather, conceive that such a system of wickedness as has been practised against me, could ever have been devised against any one? However, it is a comfort to me to think, as I before said, that to no common arts my dear deluded lord and myself have fallen victims."

"Lady Shirley," said Lord M——, "I must, though most unwillingly, declare, that it is easier to believe you capable of a common fault, such as adultery is, than to believe a man so unnaturally, so uncommonly wicked, as Mr. Melvyn must be, if he has not only laid such a train of appearances for your destruction, but has himself declared that he had been your seducer. But no, that he denies, and says that he should not have ventured to think of you improperly, if he had not been privy to your intimacy with the man in the balcony, I think he called him."

"Villain!" exclaimed the General. "What could he mean by that, my child?"

"Oh! believe me, he has a meaning in every thing; and I now see how long back he laid a plan for my destruction.—Well, I am now convinced that my fate is inevitable; and I have nothing to do, but humbly to kiss the rod," she added in the tone of deep sorrow; and with the quiet of despair, "I could have wished to have seen my lord once more; yet knowing that it would be for the last time, perhaps such a parting I am spared in mercy. But Oh! to think that I shall never now see for days, for weeks, for months, for years, the being from whom I could scarcely bear to be separated for hours!—But he was indeed become too dear to me, and I am weaned from him in time, that I may prepare myself for eternity."

Lord M——'s heart always became steeled against Lady Shirley whenever she spoke devoutly; because, not being a religious man himself, he candidly and liberally believed all those who professed religion to be either mad or hypocritical; and therefore he thought all Lady Shirley's pious language nothing but cant;—he consequently felt himself nerved by her last words to inflict the blow which he was by Lord Shirley desired to give; and he addressed her as follows:

"Lady Shirley, sorry am I to tell you that I have to execute a most painful commission. I am desired by my unhappy friend, Lord Shirley, to take away your children from you! And—" he could add no more, for Catherine uttering a frantic scream, ran to the sofa on which lay her twin children in unconscious slumbers; and throwing her arms round them, she exclaimed, "Monster! you shall have my life first!"

The noise she made awoke the sleeping infants, who, clinging round their mother's neck, called forth the tears that had hitherto refused to flow; and as they plentifully streamed from her eyes, her frenzy gradually subsided, and her spirit regained its mildness and its pious resignation. "And is it indeed so? and must I part with all the dearest ties of life? Oh! this is indeed a trial! Has then my lord *no* pity?—none?"

"He thinks you have deserved none; but he does still show some compassion; for though I believe my evidence, and that of Sir Harry would be sufficient to entitle him to a divorce, yet from consideration for you and for the family to which you belong, he will not bring your name into a court of justice, nor brand the mother of his children with unnecessary disgrace; but, if it be practicable, the tale of your guilt shall be known to as few as possible."

"Lord M——," said the General, rising indignantly, "you are Lord Shirley's friend, and you come hither authorized by him to address his wife on a subject of importance, and you have done so—and there your commission ends; I must beg, therefore, that you will as soon as may be execute the rest of your commission, cruel and barbarous as it is, that I may no longer have my eyes shocked with the sight of men who look upon that suffering angel as a vile, abandoned woman."

"I am as impatient to be gone, sir, as you are that I should go," returned Lord M——, coldly, overlooking the General's rudeness in his grief.

"Oh! stop one moment!" cried Catherine; "surely, I shall be allowed sometimes to see them, even though they are not to know I am their mother!"

"I have no authority, madam, to say any thing on this subject; but I will say any thing you wish to the earl."

Catherine now pressed both her children to her bosom; then, after a paroxysm of such anguish as none but a mother can conceive, she exclaimed, "Yes! Searcher and trier of hearts! even *these*, *these* dear ones, as it is thy will, I can resign! and now, thy will be done!"

Then, with a sort of supernatural energy, having previously rung for the nurses, she gave the children into their arms, pressed their glowing cheeks for the last time, and rushed into the next room; but in such evident perturbation that the General followed her, and found her lying on the floor in a state of happy insensibility, as it prevented her from hearing the carriage drive away that bore her infants from her arms for ever.

The next day, when Catherine, who was not well enough to rise, called the General to her bedside, he told her that he begged her to consider him henceforth as wholly devoted to her will, and that he would go with her wherever she chose. And, for a few months at least, during which time she feared Lord Shirley would not let her see her children, she wished to change the scene and to leave England. But to the continent they could not go.

"But you have a castle in Ireland?"

"I have. But it is a wild, desolate, bleak spot."

"No matter; I am not happy enough yet to be capable of being affected by the external world; there I shall be at least far removed from those who, while I am near them, I shall always be wishing to see; and there also I shall not be exposed to meet any one of my former acquaintance, who will think it necessary to disclaim all knowledge of the disgraced Lady Shirley."

The General heaved a deep sigh at the idea of this degradation, and felt as if he wished to challenge the world for her dear sake. But he felt that her scheme of retirement was a wise one, and he consented to set off as soon as she was able to travel.

"That will be to-morrow, I do not doubt," said Catherine; "and I feel a most nervous impatience to be gone!"

This impatience communicated itself to the General; and in three days at furthest, they were on the road to Wales, in their way to Ireland. But, before he went, the General spared neither time nor money in procuring agents of different descriptions to endeavour to find out the under conspirators against Catherine's fame, and try by bribery to defeat the effect of bribery.

But great as were Lady Shirley's sufferings, they were even exceeded by her lord's. In vain did Lord M—— and his other friends call; they were not admitted; in vain did Sophia write; her letters remained unanswered; till at length his health yielded to the sufferings of his mind, and Lord Shirley was soon raving in all the delirium of fever. But, luckily for Catherine, she heard neither of his illness nor danger till he was entirely restored to health. During the intervals of his delirium, he thought he saw a female form flitting past his curtains; and sometimes, when he seemed to doze, leaning over his pillow; and, wild as the idea was, he could not help fancying that this object, if real, could only be his repentant wife, who had prevailed on his attendants thus to allow her to vent her penitence and her tender remorse; and the idea was so soothing to him, spite of his wrongs, that he dared not inquire who it was that he had seen, or whether he had been deceived by the images of a delirious brain, lest he should be forced to abandon it. At length, however, he summoned resolution to ask; and to his great mortification, and almost to his disgust, a feeling which the lady was far from expecting to excite, he learned that this anxious and tender visiter was no other than Sophia Clermont.

Had not Lord Shirley's plans been fixed before, this circumstance would have determined him; and the first step he took, when he recovered, was to advertise his house in Grosvenor Square for sale, and to retire instantly to his seat, within thirty miles of London, and live there, superintending the education of his children, unseeing and unseen.

This was a stroke which the artful Sophia had not foreseen; for, as much of the tender and heroic nature of her passion for Lord Shirley had subsided, she would now have been glad to offer him, in the tender attentions of a faithful mistress, some consolation for the wound inflicted by a supposed faithless wife. Nor was it robbed of any of its force by the intelligence that the earl had left London without even bidding her adieu, either by mouth, or in writing.

"Cold, ungrateful wretch!" she exclaimed. "But it is a comfort to me to know that he is more unhappy himself than his ingratitude makes me." And she and Melvyn often rejoiced together in the complete vengeance they had both achieved on the insensible beings who had rejected their love, and whose happiness and prosperity had made them objects of their hatred and their envy.

CHAPTER XXVII.

But I must now describe how the tale of Lady Shirley's guilt was received in the circles in which she had so lately moved, the admiration of one sex, and the envy of the other.

Those women to whom the modest propriety of her dress and manner, and the correctness of her conduct had been a tacit reproach, gave eager and delighted credence to the tale of her guilt, though they thought Lord M—— and Sir Harry Turton two meddling officious tell-tales; while the men generally declared they knew not what to think; but that Melvyn was certainly a very happy fellow. Virtue and candour, however, in the shape of the Duchess of C——, refused to believe the whole to be any thing but a base conspiracy against the fame of an innocent woman. And against the argument that, as Melvyn's character as a man of honour was unblemished, he could not be villain enough to have contrived such a diabolical scheme, she set the equally unblemished and much higher character of the accused Lady Shirley; and contended that it was more

likely that the wounded pride and disappointed passion of a rejected lover should lead him to take even such far-fetched and difficult revenge, than that a woman of such sound principles and pure conduct should be guilty of the imputed crime.

While, such was the influence of the duchess in every view most creditable to the best interests of women, that she made many converts to her opinion, and the severe and hasty belief of the earl was harshly commented upon; but by no one more than by Mrs. Delaney, who, now that her great-niece Lady Shirley was no longer an object of jealousy but of pity, entered into her defence with eagerness the most persevering, and declared her to be in her opinion the most injured of women; while her husband, with whom she was constantly quarrelling, and whose gallantries made her incessantly unhappy, assured her sarcastically that he should think it right to look narrowly after her conduct, lest gallantry should be a family failing.

But while opinions were thus divided respecting the innocence or guilt of the calumniated Catherine, there was one being on whom the conviction of her entire innocence was every day and every hour forcing itself still more and more; and when removed from every influence but that of the recollection of her piety and her virtue, Lord Shirley became convinced that she had been the victim of woman's jealousy, and of unmanly vengeance. And after she had been gone about six months, he resolved no longer to delay humbling himself before her, imploring her pardon for the weakness of his rash belief, and conjuring her to return to him, and to her children.

Since Catherine had left him, never had Lord Shirley known so easy a moment as that which succeeded his resolution to write to Catherine; and when he had written his letter, full of all the eloquence of a contrite heart and a self-reproaching spirit, a weight seemed suddenly removed from his soul, which had before seemed likely to deprive him of reason; and the idea of Catherine's return, and conviction of Catherine's innocence, ultimately engrossed and gratified his imagination.

The evening on which he had written this letter, which was the day six months of Catherine's leaving England, as Lord Shirley was sitting alone in the middle room of the suite I have before described, which had been appropriated to Catherine, the door of the bow-window room behind him was suddenly thrown open, and a tall and almost gigantic figure appeared. Lord Shirley instantly concluding that it was the man of the balcony, who had visited Catherine in the same manner, instantly arose, and was fiercely approaching him. But, taking a brace of horse-pistols from under his coat, the man exclaimed, "Keep your distance, or you are a dead man. And you are also a dead man unless you sit quietly down, while I have some serious talk with you, not once attempting to ring for your servants."

Lord Shirley immediately saw his danger, and promised quiet obedience to his extraordinary guest. Besides, his curiosity was much excited relative to this man; and he hoped he was now going to hear an explanation of his connexion with Catherine, while he shuddered at the same time with apprehension lest he should be also going to hear that the being before him was her first love; in short, the identical Jack Lawson, of whom the youths at Somerset House had declared her to be "so devilish fond;" while he also knew him to be the man whose mysterious intercourse with her, to which accident made him privy, had emboldened Melvyn, as he himself declared, to address her in the language of illicit love.

"Sit down, and I will listen to you," said Lord Shirley. "I have never seen you before, as you now appear; but it is probable that, if I saw you as you are, I should know you personally."

"You shall soon judge of that," replied the stranger; and pulling off his red wig and mustachios, and the black patch he that night wore over his eye, a face and head of uncommon beauty presented themselves to Lord Shirley's view, and features and a countenance familiar to him.

"Yes, once seen, you cannot be forgotten," cried the earl; "and I remember to have seen you at parade in my grenadier troop."

"True, and I am a deserter thence; but these pistols secure me from being taken, though in the presence of my commanding officer."

"They do; and would even if I wished to seize you—and I am sure I do not," he added, sighing deeply.

The stranger heard his sigh, and understood it; and for a while his eyes lost much of their ferocity. At this moment the earl's eyes met his; and starting at the conviction that now burst upon his mind, "I am now sure," he exclaimed, "that I know who you are, untold." For in that singular but striking and regular beauty; and that expression, now fierce and now kind, now mournful and now disdainful, Lord Shirley beheld a manly likeness of Lucy Merle, and was convinced that this mysterious being must be her brother; and he concluded also, that the likeness in her, which he had often and vainly endeavoured to trace, was to the young recruit he had seen when he was with his regiment.

"Well, who am I then?" asked the deserter.

"I believe you must, from the likeness you bear her, be the brother of Lucy Merle, though I never knew or suspected that she had a brother."

"No—you can't suppose I was a brother to

boast of," replied he with a bitter smile; "but I am her brother; and I am come to tell you my story, because I hope what I have to say may serve that angel, of whom you have proved yourself unworthy, by believing her guilty of impossible crimes to such a being as she is."

"Proceed," said the earl, "I am all attention."

After a pause of some emotion Lawson Merle began his narration; and declared himself to have been, even from his earliest years, the slave to profligacy, and the companion of the low and the vicious;—that his father, tired of maintaining him and of answering his demands for money, had cast him off at a very early age; and that his mother had continued to see and assist him, till poverty prevented her doing the latter, and his father having become a bankrupt sailed for America. Soon after, his mother removed to London, and took charge of Miss Shirley. He meanwhile joined a gang of smugglers; and having been severely wounded in an engagement with some excisemen, whence he contrived to escape with his liberty, he had prevailed on his mother to admit him into her house, and nurse him during his very painful confinement. During his recovery, Miss Shirley used to condescend to assist Lucy in endeavours to amuse and amend him; and by reading the Scriptures and other good books to him, she had endeavoured to teach him the error of his ways, and lead a sinner to repentance, by disclosing to him the only path to salvation. But, while vainly endeavouring to inspire Lawson Merle with piety, Catherine unfortunately inspired him with love; and in a moment of ungovernable passion he dared to own his regard and sue for a return.

When the deserter reached this period of his story, Lord Shirley turned very pale, and a sort of indignant, disdainful expression, spite of himself, was visible in his countenance. But his strange guest seemed not to heed it, and went on as follows:

"You may think I was a very impudent dog to do this, my lord, and so I was perhaps; but women had flattered me on my person; and I was fool enough to suppose all women pretty much alike; but that angel taught me to know better. (Here Lord Shirley began to breathe freely again.) You may think she put herself in a passion, and so forth; but then I should only have thought her coy, and persisted to tease her;—but no such thing—coolly, calmly, and like a lady, she thanked me for my high opinion of her; but assured me, had I been an emperor, instead of poor Lawson Merle, that she never could have loved me, as it was impossible for her to love a man of vicious habits and profligate principles; but that she trusted my being capable of loving her was a proof I was not wholly irreclaimable, and that I had her best wishes and her prayers. Her cold manner, and her rational way of talking, immediately convinced me that she had not the least liking to me; so, feeling desperate, I threatened to kill myself. But she advised me not, for my own sake, as I was not fit to die;—this made me still more declare that I would kill myself, in order to frighten her into giving me hope. But she assured me that she only despised me the more for the base, unworthy threat, and that my death would not sit heavy on her conscience, if I put my threat into execution. Well, I did her one good service, however; for I bullied away that rascal, that Melvyn. O, that I had done more! that I had killed him!"

Here indignant emotion, in which Lord Shirley participated, deprived the deserter of the power of utterance. At length he continued thus:—"Yes; the scoundrel dared to follow her, dared to think of her, not as I did, but as what I will not name; but I 'scared his coward soul,' as the woman says in the play; I forbade him to walk before our door, and trembling and sneakingly he obeyed."

"Villain!" muttered Lord Shirley.

"Ay, I am pure to him; for I, with all my faults, never wronged innocence; and yet this fellow you could believe, Lord Shirley, rather than your angel wife!"

"Go on; I have suffered enough for my fault."

"Well, as soon as my health returned, habit and necessity, and the despair of my heart, drove me to my old haunts and my old associates. One day I wanted money, and I knew my mother had saved that very sum to send my father. Accordingly, I came to her and insisted on having it; she refused, and in her presence I broke open her bureau, took the money, and left the house. Soon after, I enlisted in your grenadier troop; whence, as you know, I deserted. But now, before I go on, I will explain the secret, that has, I find, been made use of by that Melvyn in order to involve Lady Shirley in suspicion."

"Ha! I am all attention," said Lord Shirley."

"Why, when I had robbed my poor mother, she, who is a violent, vindictive woman, fell on her knees before Miss Shirley and Lucy, whom her screams had called into the room; and after telling them what I had done, she was beginning to curse me in the most horrible manner, when the terrified girls stopped her, and conjured her to forbear. My mother had been long ashamed of me, and neither she nor my father ever spoke of me; but Miss Shirley, disapproving with her christian spirit this unnatural disregard even of a guilty child like me, used always to talk of me, and encouraged Lucy to do so too. My mother, therefore, in order to secure herself from any future mention of one whom she thought a disgrace to her, declared to Miss Shirley, that

unless she would take a solemn oath never to acknowledge to any one that she had a son, and never to name me to her or any one else, or even seem to know of my existence, she would call down the most awful curses on my head. The idea of hearing a parent curse a child was too horrible to be endured by either Miss Shirley or poor Lucy; and they both took the oath required of them by my mother. Yes, yes; my mother did not curse me. Miss Shirley prevented that—God bless her!—No, no—she did not curse me!" And forgetting that he left his pistols at the command of Lord Shirley, the wretched man started up, and walked up and down the room in agony insupportable. Lord Shirley rose also; and then the deserter aware of his defenceless state, turned hastily round, looking wistfully at the pistols. But one glance at the tearful eyes of Lord Shirley re-assured him; and the earl kindly approaching him, said, "Sit down and compose yourself; your present agony shows me that you are not yet lost to all hope of amendment, and you may command my services to the utmost. Nay, believe me, whatever agony Catherine's secret has cost me, I care not, since it was the means of saving you from a parent's curse."

The poor man wrung Lord Shirley's hand in silence; but the next moment exclaimed with a hoarse voice, "Lord Shirley, do not think to make me like you! I hate you! it is my pride to hate you for your usage of her; and I scorn to owe you an obligation." Then seizing one of his pistols, he stood looking on the earl in fierce defiance.

"Be it as you please," said Lord Shirley, coldly. And the deserter continued; "Well, having deserted, I came to London in disguise, and there I heard that Miss Shirley was living with her grandfather, and going to be married to you. The idea of her belonging to another, maddened me with jealousy. You may remember that you reproved me on the parade for disobedience of orders, and you observed how insolently I regarded you."

"Yes; and when your sister looked angry, I always wondered what and who it was that she reminded me of."

"Well, from that hour I was prepared to hate you; and your being my rival made me hate you most fiercely. I wrote such a letter to Miss Shirley! a letter threatening your life. Yes; and as she had seen me in disguise, she saw and knew me in the crowd as you led her along the piazza at St. James's. I saw her turn pale with terror, and I had a malignant pleasure in alarming her for your life."

"Now then her mysterious emotion is explained—and how satisfactorily!"

"Ay, and depend upon it, as satisfactorily will every other appearance against her be cleared up. Luckily for you and her, I was soon after forced to fly for my life, and to leave England. I returned and found you married! The evening I climbed up your balcony I was half drunk, and, when I did it, did not know what I intended to do, when I got there; but that voice, that look, when she commanded me to disappear, sobered me instantly, and, as usual, made her obeyed. But Oh, what a rage I was in when I found that fellow in the crowd below, and on losing my disguise saw that he knew me again!"

"I am anxious indeed," said Lord Shirley, "to know what could be the cause of the intercourse relative to you, which existed between Lady Shirley and him."

"I will tell you—One morning, Melvyn with one or two more came by way of frolic to the Finish in Covent Garden, where I was drinking and smoking. The sight of him was poison to me; but he called me on one side, and offered me for Lady Shirley's sake, as he knew that she was interested in me, his purse and interest in any thing I would command; and that he would consult with her how best to serve me. He then asked my name. I refused to give it; but one of my companions called me Jack Lawson, the name I went by."

Lord Shirley here heaved a deep sigh, for he recollected only too well the name of Jack Lawson.

"I suppose," continued Merle, "that on pretence of wanting to contrive to do something for me, he got Lady Shirley to talk to him. I told him that I scorned to have any thing to say to him; and hoped I had got rid of him, for I saw that he wanted to get out of me what I was or had been to Lady Shirley. But he came again in search of me to the Finish, and found me there; and then, when he began to pump me, I told him if he did not go away I 'd knock him down; and the dastard never appeared again. Well, I have little more to say; except that one night as I passed the back part of this house, I saw Lady Shirley pass the bow-window with a candle in her hand; and being in liquor I resolved to scale the window and talk with her once more; and *you know* that I *did so*."

"Yes, yes—I know it but too well!" replied Lord Shirley sighing.

"Soon after I went to Guernsey, where in a coffee-house, I overheard one gentleman relating to another the whole story of Lady Shirley and this rascal; and that Melvyn had declared he was no seducer, but that his knowledge that Lady Shirley had a secret unknown to her husband, relating to a very handsome man who had appeared in a balcony, had first emboldened him to make love to her. I was almost frantic at what I heard; and starting up, I exclaimed with a horrible oath, 'That Melvyn is a liar and a villain, and Lady Shirley an injured angel!' I then rushed out of the room, and never rested till I was on board ship, and was landed in England, and reached your house. Yes, thought

I, at all risks to myself I will come and justify her as far as I am concerned; and if I lose my life in her service, it will be well lost;—For with Melvyn," added he, with a terrible expression of countenance, "I have yet to settle!"

"And now," said he rising, "I have no more business here."

"Stay, and receive my best thanks," said Lord Shirley; "and something more that will reward your generous zeal."

"Thanks! you owe me none. I came for her sake, not yours—and reward, except the reward of my own heart, I scorn."

"You will not scorn the reward I have to offer—Read that letter." It was the letter to Catherine.

Lawson Merle did read the letter, and with strong emotion. Then returning it he said, "Now I forgive you," and retreated suddenly the way he came.—But not with his presence vanished his image, or the recollection of him, from Lord Shirley's mind; and with his wonted benevolence he began to contrive schemes to serve and save the wretched man, spite of himself. But so sweet and so sure, however unconsciously felt, is the influence of a truly virtuous and pious woman, that Lord Shirley, while meditating how to serve Lawson Merle, was referring in idea every thing he intended to do, to the opinion of his absent wife; and, owing to the active piety which he had caught from her, was bent as much on the spiritual improvement as on the temporal good of the object of his benevolent anxiety. And even when most deeply impressed with a sense of Catherine's guilt, he had always rigidly adhered to her regular and pious habits and ordinances in the government of his family. He had even bitterly repented having been led by an intemperate wish of revenge into the crime of duelling,—a crime, of the magnitude of which, in a professed Christian and sincere believer, she and she alone had taught him to be sensible; and while in every habit of his life he still felt and acknowledged her pure and even holy influence, how often, and at last how thoroughly, had the conviction forced itself on his mind, that the woman who, by a constant series of virtuous, pious, and consistent conduct, had acquired such an ascendency over his feelings and actions, could not, however appearances might be against her, be capable of deserving the slightest imputation of guilt!

Lord Shirley had passed nearly an hour in reverie on this and other subjects, when a ringing at the gate was heard; and the servant rushed in, telling his lord that a man wounded and apparently dying had been found in the road near the park gates; and he begged to know what was to be done with him. Lord Shirley gave orders for his instant admittance, and desired that the nearest surgeon might be sent for. Then hastening himself to see that his orders were executed in the best possible manner, he met the servants bearing in the wounded man; and beheld with unutterable emotion the wretched brother of Lucy Merle! At first, Lord Shirley was too much affected to speak; and the wounded man, seeing his emotion, turned on him a look expressive of gratitude.

"Let the least noisy room in the house be got ready," cried Lord Shirley. "My poor fellow!" he added, "as this sad accident was to happen, I am glad it happened here, as we will take good care of you."

The poor man, to whom the language of kindness from any one had long been a stranger, felt his lip quiver with sensations unusual to it, and again he thanked Lord Shirley by his eyes.

"How did this happen?" asked Lord Shirley.

"I will tell you some other time when we are alone," whispered Merle. And the chamber being ready, he was conveyed to it, followed by Lord Shirley.

When alone with him, he told the earl that he had been way-laid by a couple of excisemen, who owed him a grudge, and had been on the watch for his return from Guernsey; that one of them had treacherously shot him in the back, while he was defending himself against the other; and that fancying him dead and hearing some one coming up, they had run away, leaving him senseless and bleeding on the ground.

Luckily, the servants met the surgeon near the park gates; and with no little anxiety did Lord Shirley await his opinion of the poor sufferer's wound; as, however worthless his life, the idea that he had risked it for the sake of Catherine, and that but on her account he would still have been safe at Guernsey, gave great pain to the heart of Lord Shirley, and made the wretched man an object of great interest in his eyes. The unhappy young man was perfectly conscious; and as Lord Shirley, bending over him and kindly supporting his languid head, expressed his sorrow for his situation, especially as he had suffered from his exertions in Lady Shirley's cause, a look of satisfaction lighted up the fast-closing eye of the sufferer; and when Lord Shirley added, "I am going to send for the very best advice from London," the dying man turned his eyes with a most touching expression of gratitude on his anxious supporter, and, seizing his hand, pressed it affectionately to his bosom. It was the last effort of expiring nature; and after one short struggle all was entirely over.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Lucy Merle's voyage to America, though of longer duration than an American voyage generally is, was marked by no very interesting event, and productive of little variety. Had Lucy wished it, she might have been the object of even marked attention to many of the gentlemen on board; and it was evident that one of her fellow-passengers, an opulent merchant at Philadelphia, was desirous of trying his fortune with her as a lover. But as Lucy was firmly resolved never to marry, she always on principle discouraged attentions from the other sex; and her disappointed lover had not an opportunity of addressing a single word to her, except in reply to the questions which she addressed generally to the Americans on board, relative to the customs and manners of the country which she was going to inhabit.—At length land drew near, and Lucy was welcomed on shore by her expecting parents.

It was some years now since Lucy had seen her father; and little aware how sottish habits impair the beauty of person and of countenance, and still less that such had been the habits of her father, — that father whom she had fondly imagined a model of republican virtue, as he professed republican principles, —she almost started back with surprise and grief at hearing herself hailed by the endearing name of *child*, by a squalid, bloated, feeble being, in whose still fine outline only could she trace any resemblance to that image which her fancy had so long delighted to retain. And as she threw herself on his neck, tears of apprehension and disappointment mingled with those of tenderness and welcome.

She found that Mr. Merle had obtained employment as clerk in a merchant's house, and that her mother by keeping a little day-school was endeavouring to increase their little income, which the expensive habits of her husband had always forestalled. Great therefore was the delight of the parents, and still greater that of the affectionate daughter, to know that the bounty of the General had bestowed on the latter an income sufficient for all the reasonable wants both of them and herself; and as Mr. Merle's increasing infirmities made all application to business painful to him, and the employment which his necessity obliged him to had always been humbling to his pride, he eagerly resigned it, and desired that his wife would also give up teaching A B C to babies. But Lucy, and Mrs. Merle also, thought it better that she should continue her school long enough to be able to make its emoluments sufficient to pay off some of the debts they had contracted; and Mr. Merle reluctantly consented, as his pride was much hurt by the consciousness, that even in this republican land his wife was considered as not visitable by the rich and powerful, because she kept a school.

It seemed as if Catherine had foreseen that Lucy would find her improvident father in a state of insolvency; since, besides the very handsome supply of clothes which she had insisted on bestowing on Lucy, far more than sufficient as an outfit for her voyage, she had enclosed in a most affectionate letter bills of exchange on a house at ———, which, in case she wanted more than her half-year's dividend for any immediate emergency, were convertible into money directly; and such was the state of her father's affairs, that Lucy was glad to avail herself immediately of the precautionary kindness of her generous friend. Nor did Lucy's pride object to her receiving pecuniary obligation from the friend she loved. Had I been in her situation I would have done the same for her, thought Lucy; and that consciousness removed all objections.

But Lucy and her parents needed not have wanted any thing that money could procure, could the former have borne to listen to the addresses of the merchant who had been her fellow-passenger to America; and so liberal were his offers to her, that she underwent much persecution from Mr. and Mrs. Merle on the subject. But Lucy, supported by conscious integrity, was firm in her refusal even to give her lover an opportunity of winning her affections.

"You know," she said to her parents, "that my own peculiar feelings and my ideas of moral rectitude will not suffer me to marry any one; therefore I will not run the risk of exposing either myself or another to the misery of a hopeless attachment."

At her scruples they laughed; against her obstinacy they inveighed; but Lucy persisted, and her lover reluctantly withdrew.

To resign the idea of marriage with this gentleman, and with two others who succeeded him, was no trial to the heart of Lucy Merle, and she hoped that she should never know the feeling of hopeless love. But the time was at hand when she was doomed to experience its power, and from a quarter whence she little expected; and she learnt too soon that the path of rigid duty is rarely one of flowers and sunshine.

It was soon only too evident that her father was rapidly declining, the victim of his intemperance. Luckily for Lucy's comfort she retained for him no affection but that of habit; so thoroughly did she now appreciate his character, and see in his conduct the slave of self-indulgence, not the temperate, self-denying republican. Still it was very painful to her to know that he was every day drawing nearer to his dissolution, the victim of his vices—and those vices unrepented of. But for her to minister to this callous, vitiated mind, she knew to be impossible; all therefore that she could do she did to the utmost of

her power; and as going from place to place by water carriage was the greatest relief of which his restless malady was susceptible, Lucy procured for him every accommodation necessary to make these voyages as little fatiguing to him as possible; and sometimes there were persons on board these moving hotels, as some of these boats might be called, whose power of anecdote amused the otherwise irritable invalid.

One day, while they were on board a vessel of this description, a smart English servant came out of one of these apartments, and begged to know whether any lady had a bottle of salts or aromatic vinegar, as his lord was very ill with the headache.

The servant probably spoke of his lord with an air of consequence, and as if he expected to excite in his American hearers as much respect by that appellation as it would have procured him from English ones. But he was mistaken; and a native American replied rather coarsely, "*we* republicans, friend, do not use such things,—they may do very well for *lords*, but not for *men*." And the man was retiring disappointed and distressed, when Lucy stepped forward, and offered him a *vinagrilia* which Catherine had given her, and on which was engraved the name of Catherine Shirley.

This action of Lucy's was witnessed with a sarcastic smile; but she regarded it not; she would have done the same for any one who needed assistance; and the idea of assisting an English lord was pleasant to her feelings, since for the sake of Lord Shirley she was inclined to think complacently of the whole peerage.

Of Lord Livesay she rarely thought; but when she did, it was with a feeling of gratitude for his intentions towards herself, and respect for the rational self-command which had led him to fly from the temptation to which it would have been weak in him to yield. Still it was not without surprise mingled with pleasurable emotion, that, issuing from a contiguous apartment with her *vinagrilia* in his hand, Lucy beheld Lord Livesay himself; who, seeing the name of Catherine Shirley on the box, had felt curious to know who the beautiful young lady was, as his servant described her to be, that possessed a trinket bearing a name so honoured and so beloved; nor could the young peer discover without excessive delight that the possessor of the valuable trinket was Lucy Merle.

Pleasure sparkled almost equally in the eyes of both, and deepened the mantling colour of their cheeks on this unexpected rencontre; though, after the first joyful emotion at meeting had subsided, Lucy's manner resumed its usual reserve, and Lord Livesay saw that her joy at seeing *him* was not likely to be as permanent as his at meeting with *her*.

But he had so much to ask, and she so much to answer, relative to those in whom they were equally interested, that Lucy could not help giving the young peer her almost undivided attention; and before the voyage was at an end, Lucy found that the thoughtless, dissipated youth, who had been made known to her under such unpromising circumstances, was become a reading, thinking, industrious man, travelling for information, and eager to do all the good which a very considerable increase of fortune in America had enabled him to do.

A relation of his mother's who was an American, had died some months previous to this rencontre with Lucy, and had left him a considerable tract of land in Rhode Island, of which he had come over to take possession. And having made all his slaves free, and in every thing displayed the noble feelings of his generous nature, he was going the tour of the United States as a private gentleman when he met Lucy on board the boat.

When Lucy presented Lord Livesay to her parents, he blushed, from recollecting that Lord Shirley (as one means of disgusting him with a marriage with the daughter) had told him that he would make him acquainted with the mother. And Lucy, though not conscious why Lord Livesay blushed, felt herself blush also. But the young peer was agreeably disappointed in Mrs. Merle's appearance; he saw not her vulgarity; for he had not lately associated with women of much refinement, and Mrs. Merle was, he thought, quite on a par in breeding with her republican neighbours, while in point of beauty she was excelled only by her daughter. And Mr. Merle's manners were certainly those of a gentleman. Long before the termination of the voyage obliged Lord Livesay to take leave of his new acquaintances, his preference of Lucy had become a decided passion, and he had resumed his intention of paying his addresses to her,—"For why," thought Lord Livesay, "should not I live in America? With her, I should be happy anywhere; and her country shall be my country;—and here, where all ranks are equal, no one can object to my choice on the ground of inequality of birth."

To be brief; Lord Livesay, though withheld some time by the timidity always attendant on true love, had courage at last to reveal his passion to Lucy, with the delighted approbation of her parents, but received from her a firm and positive rejection,—a rejection, too, so coldly and composedly given, that Lord Livesay could not for a moment suspect, that in her heart there lived a preference as decided and as tender as his own; and that the woman who thus refused to be his wife, felt for him all the faithful and devoted fondness that distinguishes a woman's love. Lord Livesay, agonized beyond the power of words to express, wrung his hands in silence, and rushed out of the house.

I will not describe the scene that succeeded, when her parents were informed of this second and more unaccountable rejection. But in vain did they argue; in vain did they plead; in vain reproach her with her want of obedience and filial piety. "There is a duty, and a strong one too, that I owe you," cried Lucy, "but it is a more binding one still that I owe to my Creator. Even were it possible for me to conquer my repugnance to become the wife of any man, while I have a brother whose life may be at any moment forfeited to the laws of his country, and I be therefore the means of unmerited disgrace to the husband who had honoured me by his choice;—even, I say, could I conquer this well-principled reluctance, I could not marry without being allowed to reveal the existence of this unhappy brother; and that I am bound by oath not to reveal without your consent—which consent you refuse."

"To be sure," exclaimed her father; "for scarcely any man would marry you, if it were known what sort of man your brother was; and you must be an ungrateful child, as well as a weak, foolish woman, to reproach us with what we mean entirely for your good."

"To deceive the man she marries cannot be conducive to a woman's earthly good; for accident might reveal the deception, and—"

"Deception! it is no deception. You are not asked whether you have a brother, therefore you do not deceive in not saying that you have one."

"Our ideas of right and wrong on this subject are so totally at variance," cried Lucy, "that we cannot talk on it; but I must act up to my own ideas, not yours; and I tell you, once for all, that if I am allowed to reveal this secret to Lord Livesay, I will see him again; and if, knowing that this disgraceful connexion exists, he persists in wishing to marry me, I am willing to be his wife."

"No; you shall be his wife without; for I am very sure," replied Mrs. Merle, seconded by her husband, "that he will not marry you if he knows what you have to tell him."

"Then it is my wish," cried Lucy, as she left the room, "that he and I may meet no more." And she said this with so much sorrow in her tone and countenance, that her mother was convinced she loved Lord Livesay; and instantly despatched a note to the earl, begging him not to give over his suit, because she was sure in her heart that her daughter loved him.

Lucy, meanwhile, had locked herself into her chamber, a prey to overwhelming emotions; amongst which, however, the consciousness of unblemished integrity shone proudly preeminent. "I have been enabled to act up to my principles, and according to my sense of duty," she exclaimed, raising her tearful eyes and clasped hands to heaven; "and I am thankful even in the midst of suffering." For it was no longer on republican but on Christian grounds that Lucy built her superstructure of virtue for herself or others. She had found the inefficacy of the first; she had seen in the practice of many around her, but especially in the conduct of her parents, how little integrity was the result of mere moral axioms and political opinions; and she became convinced that human beings must have purer and higher motives of action, more effectual incentives to good, and more powerful restrainers from evil.

"Lady Shirley was right," thought Lucy; "her standard was always Christianity, while mine was republicanism. I am convinced, and I bless God that I am so."

She might indeed be thankful for the change; for at this moment of hopeless and well-founded tenderness, at this hour of strong temptation to offend against integrity, because the interests of her love were at variance with her principles,—where was she to look for consolation under misery, and strength to resist the pleadings of her heart, but from that "Help which faileth not," and from that faith which teaches entire reliance on the goodness and mercy of Him who alone knows what is best for us?

Lord Livesay was unable immediately to act upon the hint which Mrs. Merle had given him to continue his visits, as Mr. Merle, after a few hours' illness, the very day after Lucy had rejected him, breathed his last in the arms of his almost frantic wife, whose grief partook of the violent nature of her temper, and who for some days was a prey to the most clamorous and ungovernable sorrow. But as soon as its first violence was passed, she resumed her old habits; and was provoked to find that Lucy, whose quiet sorrow she had denominated a proof of want of love for her father, still continued to grieve as much as she had done at first; and in order to tease Lucy, she sent to beg that Lord Livesay would give them daily as much of his company as he could.

It was not in nature for Lord Livesay to resist this invitation; nor could Lucy always deny herself the pleasure of conversing with him; though, generally speaking, she forced herself to retire to her room soon after his entrance. The consequence was to both an increase of attachment; but while Lord Livesay hoped, Lucy, knowing what he did not know, utterly despaired.

At this time, Mrs. Merle received poor Lady Shirley's letter, requesting most earnestly to receive, what she so strenuously desired, even to the last moment of her remaining in London, viz.: permission to disclose to her lord, and to him alone, the whole story of her wretched son, and to explain the mystery which had so often disturbed Lord Shirley's peace of mind.

Catherine, though averse to bribe any one to do only an act of common justice, was now induced by a sense of what she owed to her

husband, to add, that she was willing to purchase this permission by giving any sum of money for it which Mrs. Merle might require. "There, Lady Shirley talks sense now," cried Mrs. Merle, handing the letter to her daughter; "and I will hear reason. For money I will do what she requires."

"How! to be sure you will not take money for doing your duty to one to whom I owe so much?"

"To be sure I will. As you will not enrich me or yourself by marrying as I would have you, I must enrich myself as I can; so write to Lady Shirley, and tell her that I value the leave she asks, that is, to absolve her from her oath, at a thousand guineas." And Lucy retired in an agony of wounded feeling to her chamber.

A few days after, Lucy had the further mortification of hearing from her mother that she had accepted the addresses of a merchant who lived near them; and that before the year of her mourning was out she intended to become a wife again; assuring Lucy that she had told her lover she should not come to him portionless, for that she expected to present him with a thousand guineas.

Lucy therefore no longer delayed to write to Lady Shirley; and was only supported under this increased pressure of conscious wretchedness, by her consistent and confiding piety.

But she was soon to undergo a still greater trial to her affectionate heart; for, having borrowed several English papers at once, she read in one obscure hints that a matrimonial *fracas* had taken place in high life, between a noble earl and his countess, remarkable for her beauty, her talents, and her *piety* (piety in italics;) and that the General, her g——r, had not been able to settle the dispute, which originated in jealousy of Mr. M——n. The next paper was fuller in its details, and inserted the initials of Lord S—— and Lady S——; till at length the wondering and agitated Lucy read in the last paper, that Lady Shirley, separated from her lord in consequence of being strongly suspected of a criminal connexion with Mr. Melvyn, was gone to Ireland with General Shirley; and her wretched lord, with his children, had shut himself up in his country-seat.

"I will not believe it. 'T is all a newspaper calumny," cried Lucy with the most violent indignation. "But I will send instantly for Lord Livesay, perhaps he has letters from England." And at this moment of agitation she was told that Lord Livesay was with her mother.

Lucy instantly ran into the room, and turned very pale on seeing the excessive agitation of her noble lover. "What does this mean?" cried Lucy, pointing to the paragraph in the paper of the latest date.

"It means falsehood, fraud, malice, I think," replied Lord Livesay. "Nothing can ever make me believe Lady Shirley guilty."

"Bless you! bless you for that, my dear lord!" said Lucy bursting into tears. "No," she resumed, struggling with her tears; "no—she can't be guilty; and Lord Shirley must have been imposed upon. But have you no letter?"

"Yes—read that, which gives, you see, an account of the whole affair."

Lucy did read it, till she could read no more; but a mist came over her eyes, and she was for a few moments, though not insensible, almost unable to stand, or think, or move.

"It is evident to me," cried the earl, "that there has been some foul play in this business; and my angelic friend must be wretched, wherever she is."

"My dear mother," said Lucy, starting up, but falling back again on her seat, "have I your leave to go to England? Indeed, if you refuse me, I do not think that I shall be able to keep my senses."

"Then go—for I am sure I know not of what use you are to me, as you do nothing but mope all day long; so go as soon as you please."

Lord Livesay during this speech was excessively agitated. And on Lucy's saying, "When do you think a packet will sail for England?" he answered, in a voice almost inarticulate from strong emotion, "A very swift-sailing frigate sails to-morrow—I have already taken my passage in it, to hasten to my poor friend; and I only came hither to take leave."

"Dear! how fortunate!" cried the indelicate mother. "Then you and Lucy can go together!"

How unfortunate rather! thought her more rightly feeling daughter; when Lord Livesay, aware of what was passing in her mind, assured her with great solemnity of manner, that if she would consent to go in the same ship with himself—and as there was no other to sail soon, friendship required her to surmount the otherwise proper scruples of her delicacy,—he would pledge himself in any way she chose, not to approach her as a lover at all (and never without her leave) during the whole of the voyage.

But Lucy's propriety of feeling made her resolve to follow in another ship, however eager she might be to hasten to Lady Shirley in disgrace and adversity. And as a ship unexpectedly sailed the day after Lord Livesay did, she was not much distressed by the self-denial she had practised; and she arrived in England soon after Lord Livesay.

When Lord Livesay landed, he hastened to London, where he had business to transact; but Lucy proceeded thence, as fast as four horses could carry her, to the seat of Lord Shirley.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Lord Shirley was scarcely risen the next day, when he was summoned down to a lady in the drawing-room. And he beheld with indescribable emotion, Lucy Merle, herself.

Lord Shirley's feelings, moved and softened as they had just been by the late scene with Lawson Merle and his untimely end, were prepared to be awakened almost to an agony of tenderness, by the sight of the sister, and by all the associations connected with her. Eagerly therefore did he advance to welcome her, and would have folded her to his heart with the affection of a brother; but retreating from him with a look that forcibly reminded him of Lawson Merle, Lucy coldly said, "My lord, I come not hither as a friend—I cannot regard as such the husband who could desert, and believe guilty, such a wife and woman as Lady Shirley. I only come to ask you where she is, that I may hasten to her; and if it be disgrace that she is enduring, it is my first wish to be a partaker of it through life."

"The wish and the determination are worthy of you," replied Lord Shirley; "and I should rejoice to know that Lady Shirley had such a companion—but—"

"But what, my lord?"

"Read this—and if you can, forgive me!" 'Twas a copy of the letter to Catherine, expressing his entire belief in her innocence, and his earnest entreaty to be allowed to bring her back to her home again.

Lucy was pleased and affected; still she owned, with her usual candour, that she could not excuse his not believing her innocent from the first, and she persisted in her wish of setting off for Ireland immediately.

"Not alone," said Lord Shirley; "one of my maid-servants and a man shall go with you. On no other terms will I let you know where Lady Shirley is." But here his voice faltered and his lip quivered, as he added, "Dear Miss Merle, you have a brother—an unfortunate brother!"

"You know then—you know all!" cried Lucy, turning pale.

"Yes—and I know him; he has been here." Then not waiting for further questions, Lord Shirley described her brother's visit, and the generous motives that prompted it; and declared himself so pleased with the good feelings that it evinced, and such a respectable capability of fully appreciating the worth of Lady Shirley, that he felt convinced he had had noble qualities, however they had been choked up by vice and vicious companions.

Lucy, who had often wept bitter tears over her brother's vices, now had the satisfaction of weeping sweet and tender ones over, she trusted, the deserved praises of his merits; and she suffered her memory to dwell once more on the image of that brother, the companion and play-fellow of her childhood, beloved through all his errors, and regretted spite of his baneful influence over her own prospects, till the tender wishes of her heart found utterance at her lips, and she exclaimed, "O dear, dear Lawson! would I could but see thee again! My lord, I have been even forbidden to name him! but I may talk of him now; and you say that I may praise him too. O that I could but see him once again!"

Lord Shirley rose from his seat, walked across the room, stirred the fire, walked back again to his seat, unable to disclose to Lucy, that the brother still so dear to her heart existed no longer. At length, however, in order to give her time and himself too to recover from the influence of such strong emotions, he asked her questions concerning her voyage; and Lucy with much embarrassment owned that Lord Livesay accompanied her.

"Livesay in England! I rejoice to hear it. Have you seen much of him in America?"

"A great deal—more than I wished or approved; and far more than you, my lord, would think proper."

"I understand you. And Livesay is your lover, I suppose?"

"He is—but not accepted."

"No! and are you really insensible to his merit?"

Lucy blushed, sighed, and turned away. After a while she told Lord Shirley, under a solemn promise of secresy, the reasons of her resolution never to marry, which had so often excited his wonder, and which, when now explained, excited equally his respect and admiration.

"Then may I hope," said Lord Shirley, "that it was not dislike of my friend, but honour alone that made you reject his addresses?"

"Honour only. But Lord Livesay does not know this; for I thought that he would get the better of his attachment sooner if he thought I was indifferent to him."

"Noble girl!" cried Lord Shirley; "and I trust that such conduct will not be unrewarded. But—" Here he turned away, and walked again in perturbed silence up and down the room; for, though he felt that Lawson Merle's death would remove every obstacle to Lord Livesay's wishes, he knew what agony he should inflict on the generous, disinterested girl before him, when he informed her of her brother's death. But at last he took courage, and grasping Lucy's hand, said, "You wish to see your brother again; and you shall see him if you choose it, as he is here, he is in this house."

"In this house?" exclaimed Lucy, trembling and pale with emotion, for she feared she knew not what. "Then where is he? Let me see him instantly!"

"Not yet!—he is ill, he has been wounded."

"Wounded! Oh! not by his own hand? Do not tell me that."

"No. By the hands of treachery. His visit here was watched, and when he left me he was set upon by ruffians; therefore, dear girl, be comforted by knowing that, though he is dead, he fell a victim to a good and not a base action,—he fell from his exertions in our dear Catherine's cause! since, but for her sake, he would now have been safe in Guernsey!"

There was consolation in that thought. But at that moment Lucy could not feel its power, and Lord Shirley wisely allowed her to vent her feelings unrestrainedly in tears. As soon as she could speak, she begged to be allowed to see the body.

"You shall," said Lord Shirley, "if you will promise to restrain your feelings as much as possible."

"I will try to obey you," said Lucy. Then turning round, she said in a firmer tone, "Now I am ready to attend you," and gave her hand to Lord Shirley. But the moment she beheld the dead body, beheld as a corpse the being ever dear to her heart, though so long and fatally a stranger to her sight, and beheld him in the very prime of life snatched away with all his unrepented sins upon his head, her self-possession forsook her, and she fell in an agony of tears and suffocating sobs upon the unconscious corpse; while with all the first delirious feelings of affliction, she called him by every fond and tender name, and conjured him to speak to her, telling him that she brought him his father's forgiveness on his deathbed.

Lord Shirley gently raised her from the body, and reminded her of her promise to be calm, or that he must in kindness remove her from the chamber. This threat recalled Lucy to herself, and her feelings took another and a more soothing turn; for, falling on her knees, she raised her hands and eyes for some moments in silent prayer; then saying, "I have now done for him the only duty I can do," she pressed her warm lip to his cold unconscious one, and allowed Lord Shirley to lead her to the apartment prepared for her, where she was prevailed on by the attendant to undress and go to bed. Nor did she appear again till the next day; when Lord Shirley told her that he had just received a letter from Lord Livesay, announcing his intention of being with him the next morning.

"Then it is the more proper," said Lucy, "that I should set off for Ireland this evening, though I am loth to go away and leave the last tribute to the dead unpaid."

"That tribute I myself will pay, and probably Livesay will join me in it. Yes, it may be as well that you should go, accompanied as I have told you that you must be; and in a short time, if I am forgiven,—and, O Miss Merle, I conjure you to be my advocate,—my young friend and I shall hope to follow you;—remember, all obstacles to his success are now removed."

"This is not a time, my lord, for me to think of any thing of the kind," replied Lucy blushing. "But while you order horses for me, I will go prepare for my journey, and take my last leave of him whom I shall see no more."

Lucy visited the corpse of her brother for the last time; and in a few hours more was on her road to Ireland and her friend; and as it was remarkably fine weather for the month of February, she proceeded on her journey with safety and with speed.

The next day Lord Livesay arrived, and had so much to communicate of importance to Lord Shirley and to Catherine, that the good news of his probable success as a lover, when told him, served as a reward for his own interesting information, which shall be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER XXX.

Though Lord Livesay was silent, it had always been his intention, as soon as he reached London, to obtain from persons on the spot all the information that he could, relative to the mysterious affair in which those whom he so highly valued had been such prominent actors. And he found that Melvyn's refusing to fire at Lord Shirley had raised him so much in general opinion, that that circumstance, united to the indulgence shown to men on such occasions, had kept him in society, and made him admired by some women even more than ever; while many declared, and amongst them were Mrs. Somerley and Lady X——, that Melvyn must have been the seduced, not the seducer;—as what man, without advances impossible to be misunderstood, would have thought of attempting the honour of such a pretender to *righteousness over-much* as Lady Shirley notoriously was!

Lord Livesay, without giving his own sentiments, heard what every one had to say on the subject, and interrogated those likely to give him information; and amongst the rest the Duchess of C——, who had heard from Catherine's own mouth, before she left London, her account of all the most suspicious circumstances, and believed Lady Shirley's innocence as spotless as her own.

"Alas!" cried Lord Livesay, "while this man is still received, as I am told he is, in society, one presumptive proof of Lady Shirley's innocence is taken away; and those who receive *him* must continue to speak ill of *her*."

"True," replied the duchess; "his supposed generous conduct in refusing to fire at Lord Shirley, has done much for him with some persons. As for the duke and myself, on no account, as the paramour of a married

woman, would we admit him into our house; and believing him, as we do, to be capable of even greater villany, as it is *cold-blooded* vice, I assure you, Lord Livesay, that the very sight of him is horrible to us."

Lord Livesay said nothing in reply, except that "he thought the example of her and her husband ought to be generally followed," and left the house. His resolution was now taken. He called on a gentleman whose services he knew that he might command, and whose honour and courage were of the most distinguished reputation; and after a short conference with him, he ordered a post-chaise and drove to the house of Melvyn. And now I shall let Lord Livesay speak in his own person.

"You may suppose, my dear Shirley," said he, "that I am not a man to be silent with regard to any obligation that is conferred on me; and you may believe that your generous conduct to me in my distresses was as well known to the circle in which I moved as to myself."

"I am sorry for it," said Lord Shirley. "But why do you tell me this?"

"In order to account for the immediate change of countenance, the pallid cheek and conscious eye of Melvyn, as soon as I followed my own name into his apartment, accompanied by my friend; for he was shrewd enough to know instantly that Lord Livesay, returned unexpectedly from America, and calling on him with a countenance too of stern defiance, must come as the friend of the man to whom he owed so much, and also as the avenger of those wrongs of which he had made Lord Shirley unable to avenge himself."

"What do I hear?—Did you then challenge him! and have you fought? and is he wounded?"

"I know my man better than you, my dear lord; and I hate duelling as much as you do. But let me proceed; I told him that I was just landed in England, whither I had returned in order to avenge my friend's wrongs on him the injurer; and that I had pistols in my coach, then at the door; that we would drive in search of a second if he wished it, mine being already provided; and then go out of London entirely, or to Chalk Farm, whichever he liked best.

"My friend and I looked steadfastly at him all this time; and we both saw his coward soul tremble within him. After a pause, he said, with a dry and parched lip apparently, 'that he had no quarrel against me, and that he could not and would not run a risk of butchering a man in cold blood;—that honour and conscience forbade him to add to the wrongs he had already done Lord Shirley by aiming at his life; and integrity equally forbade him to aim at the life of a man whom he liked as a pleasant companion, and highly respected for the motives of his present hostility. I repeat it,' added he, 'I have no ill-will towards you; and I cannot, will not meet you.'

"'Now then sir,' cried I, 'can you retain your good-will towards me, when I tell you, in presence of this honourable gentleman, that I believe you to be a villain, a mean, vindictive, malignant villain, the asperser of unblemished virtue, and the base conspirator against the fame of the most spotless of her sex?'

"O that you had but seen his countenance! But he uttered not the rage that inwardly tore him; on the contrary, with uncommon self-command, he said, '*Well*, my lord,—this is manly, this is courageous, to insult a man who has decidedly told you he will not fight!'

"'And why will he not? Because he is a coward,' replied I, 'a sneaking, pitiful coward; and I will post you everywhere.'

"'This is too much to bear. Gentlemen, I am ready to attend you with or without a second.' 'Without then be it,' said I, 'as it would lose time to go in search of one.' And we were going out at the door followed by Melvyn, when I saw his countenance change and his whole frame tremble like our friend Acres' in the play; and with an oath he declared that he would not fight me, be the consequences what they might; then running up stairs again, he locked himself into his room.

"This termination of the affair was what I wanted, and rejoiced at. I did not want him to fight, but to prove himself a coward by refusing to fight, as I wanted to knock him down from that undeserved height to which his refusal to fire at you had raised him. Accordingly my friend and myself drove to all the coffee-houses and taverns were men of fashion congregate. We also went to the houses of those women of fashion who have countenanced Melvyn, and we told the story in every particular.

"The consequence was that at an assembly at Mrs. Somerley's that evening, he was cut by most of the men and women present who had before admired his heroic forbearance; and I do flatter myself, that, in proportion as he becomes despised, the possibility of his having aspersed Lady Shirley, and contrived himself all the suspicious circumstances against her, will gain ground every day; and that you yourself, my dear Shirley, will cease to admit for one moment the possibility of her guilt."

"You are a generous, noble fellow," said the earl; "and I thank you heartily; and to reward you, I will give you two pieces of information. In the first place, I am already, from the suggestions of my own mind, entirely convinced of Lady Shirley's innocence, and have written to request her pardon, and permission to fetch her back from Ireland."

"What joy! joy enough at once. I am sure that you cannot go beyond it."

"O yes, I can.—In the second place, know that Lucy Merle loves you, fondly loves you! and the only obstacle to your union with her, an obstacle opposed merely by her noble sense of rectitude, is now, according to her own account, removed."

Lord Livesay on hearing this did not exclaim "What joy!" The feeling was too delicate, too deep, too sacred for words or exclamations to express; but hiding his face in his handkerchief, he leaned on his elbow in agitated silence, while Lord Shirley described the interesting events of the preceding two days, and ended by cordially approving his union with a woman whose rectitude of principle had proved itself to be equal to the greatest trial, and who was therefore fitted to behave with propriety in any situation which she was called upon to fill.

"You delight me beyond expression," said Lord Livesay, at length, almost inarticulate from emotion. "And she loved me, then, all the time that she treated me so coldly? Her poor brother too! I wish that he had lived, for I think I could have loved *him!* Well, I shall have a melancholy satisfaction in joining you in paying the last respect to his memory. The father, you know, is dead, the mother going to be married again; and Lucy herself does not find a republic, in practice, so charming a thing as she expected. She found where she lived, at least, an aristocracy of wealth as disgusting to her, or more so than the aristocracy of birth; and though she still thinks a republic in theory a fine thing, she will, I believe, be contented to take England as it is, and to forgive its faults for the sake of its perfections. So, my dear Shirley, am I not a happy fellow in prospect?"

"You are," replied Lord Shirley sighing. "And if Catherine will forgive and return to me, I, who do not deserve to be as happy as you, may be happy myself, except when I am troubled with most compunctious visitings, as I must be, for having ever allowed even circumstances as strong as those against her were, to weigh against the evidence of her character and her virtues. And then to think that you and Lucy and so many did her justice,—while I—." Here Lord Shirley was too much affected to continue the conversation, and Lord Livesay changed the subject.

Four days after, the funeral of Lawson Merle took place. And the poor outcast of his family while living, was followed to his early grave by noble mourners.

The servants knew nothing more than that he was a gentleman known to their master, who had been wounded by ruffians, probably robbers; and the wig and mustachios having fallen off in the struggle, he appeared as himself when brought into the house. And as their lord said that he was a near relation of Miss Merle's, no wonder was felt that he was treated with such tenderness and attention.

As soon as the funeral was over, Lord Livesay expressed his eager wish to visit the General and Lady Shirley, and tell the former of his meeting with Melvyn. Of his other reasons for wishing to go to Ireland it was not necessary that he should inform Lord Shirley, who approved his going without delay, and was now beginning to tell the hours that might elapse before he could receive an answer from Catherine. At length, about four or five days after Lord Livesay's departure, a letter, in the well-known hand of Catherine met his eager view. It was as follows:

"Then my prayers have been heard! and you, my dearest lord, are convinced of my entire innocence,—and merely from the suggestions of your own mind! O blessed tidings! I have then lived long enough! You will see by this shaking hand, that I have been and am ill; but the sight of you and my dear children will make me quite well again.—Hasten then to us, dearest, dearest Shirley! and remember only of our past sorrows what is necessary to enhance, by contrast, the sense of our present happiness.

"Your ever fond and faithful

"CATHERINE SHIRLEY.

"My grandfather and Lucy write by another packet."

Lord Shirley wept over this short, but affectionate and forgiving letter, tears of the tenderest gratitude. But he beheld with dismay the imperfect character, so unlike her own; and a feeling of alarm tempered his sense of joy. "I wish that the other letters would come," thought Lord Shirley, "that I may hear what they say of her health."

CHAPTER XXXI.

MELVYN's refusal to fight Lord Livesay had lowered him not only in the eyes of men, but women of fashion; and he had thought it expedient to leave London till the circumstance had ceased to be remembered.

Accordingly, having been much charmed with the beauty of a tradesman's daughter in the town of C——, which was very near a fashionable watering-place, he hired apartments in the town itself, on pretence of being ordered by his physicians to take the hot sea-baths at B——. But the young lady in question united so much self-respect, so much virtue, and so much talent to her beauty, that Melvyn soon began to see that he had no chance of obtaining her except on honourable terms; and his attentions, therefore, soon appeared so serious in their nature, that Sophia Clermont heard that Melvyn was on the point of marriage.

This intelligence alarmed her for the safety of some letters and notes of hers, which, she well knew, Melvyn had the precaution to keep, in order to make it impossible for her to betray him without running the risk of being betrayed herself. It was therefore painful to her to think that Melvyn was going to marry a young wife, who might gain access to his papers, and discover secrets relative to her, which might not be safe in her keeping. Full of this impression, she lost no time in writing to Melvyn on the subject, and stating that, as he was likely to become a husband and she a wife, since she had nearly resolved to accept the offers of an elderly man of high rank, as she had nearly outrun her fortune, she thought it advisable that they should make a mutual exchange of letters and notes, which letters and notes should be burnt by each party in the presence of a third person, as soon as received.

Melvyn had no objection at all to this arrangement, as there were letters of his in Sophia's hands which he had often been afraid that she might, in a transport of rage, have shown, to the utter destruction of his character; and he was the more ready to do this because he knew that, even when her letters were returned, Sophia's good name was still in his power. Consequently he was not slow in informing her, that as he always carried letters of importance with him whithersoever he went, her letters, &c. should be sealed up, ready to return whenever he received his own.

Immediately on the arrival of this welcome answer, Sophia collected together all the letters and notes which she had ever received from Melvyn, and sent them to Melvyn at C——, by the hand of a person whom she could trust, desiring that Melvyn would burn them in the presence of that person, and return hers by the same hand.

On the 12th of February, 1809, this person arrived at C——, delivered the packet to Melvyn, saw its contents burnt, and received from him a promise, that on the evening of the 13th the packet for Miss Clermont should be sent to him, to take to London with him at six the next morning. Nor did Melvyn promise more than he really meant to perform; and on the morning of the 13th of February he collected faithfully all the promised manuscripts, and sealed them together. He then walked out as usual, and when he returned he sat down and wrote the following letter to Sophia:

"I have been walking out, and am returned home in a most horrible state of mind, and haunted by the remembrance of that injured angel, whom I by my artifices, aided by your infernal suggestions, drove from her home, her husband, and her children! — Did you think that I had been such a fool, Sophy? But greater fools were those who could believe the appearances raised against her; and he (her husband) deserved to suffer for his folly and insensibility to the merit of such a woman. If I had not hated and loathed him, and pined till I was revenged on him for other causes, I should have hated him for his weak credulity and blindness! Sophy, you must indulge me in talking on this subject, although I know that you hate it, and that the praise of Lady Shirley, though she is disgraced, is odious to your ear. But this is the last time I will so tease you; for I too must try to forget her.—Forget her! impossible! Now, when I shut my eyes, I see that pure angelic expression! that soft, chaste, long, Madonna eyelid! —Well, I am glad that I never, after I had accused her, met that eye of mild reproach! I, even I, could not have borne it, Sophy! Now to explain why I am so full of this subject this morning.

"I went into a shop just now, and as soon as I entered, an old woman screamed out, 'Tis he! the wretch! the monster!' and down she dropped in a fit; and while I, though aware that some young women might have a right to call me a wretch, thought it very unlikely that an old woman should; and stood looking on with a face of great innocence, saying, 'the poor soul must have mistaken me for some one else.' At last she ceased to sob; and opening her ill-looking eyes, fixed them on me, exclaiming, 'O thou vile man! I know you, Mr. Melvyn — I know you for the base destroyer of the reputation of my angel lady, of my betrayed Lady Shirley! But vengeance will overtake you! — Away! your sight destroys me!' And looking and feeling like a self-convicted culprit, I did obey her, and stole home as fast as possible; — for this just reprover was Mrs. Norris, the General's old servant; and, Sophy, I still hear her voice. But I could not have done it without help. And what dolts I had to deal with! If Sir Harry Turton had not been an idiot, could he have supposed that I should not have taken care to see that no one watched or followed me, when I was going to take a lady where I did, unless I meant to be observed? And would not Lord M——, if he thought at all, have known that before I put a lady under such circumstances into a coach, I should have looked about to be sure that there were no spies in a corner near? And would Lady Shirley, if conscious of guilt, have let the coachman know where she lived, and have been set down at her own door?— Was the *vulgar slang* about cant and hypocrisy, and *saints* being *sinners*,—was that to be believed and attended to, in contradiction to what I must call her consummate loveliness of life? I must lay down my pen.

"Evening.

"I have dined, or rather drunk myself into some composure. I conclude that my matrimonial scheme will be quite done up by old Norris; for the parents, before violent against

it, will now be worse. Well, no matter—but it grows late—I must do up the parcel, and enclose your letters in this frenzied scrawl! Forgive it; it shall, if I can help it, be my last on this subject.

"JOHN MELVYN."

It was VALENTINE'S EVE; and Melvyn, having enclosed the packet in his letter, put the whole in a large piece of white paper; then sealed the envelope very curiously with three seals. And having done so, he gave it to his own man, in strict charge that he should deliver it himself into the hands of Sophia's agent at such an inn.

But Melvyn's man had other engagements; he therefore gave this important packet to the care of the footboy, who immediately sallied forth with it in one direction, while the valet went in another; and as he walked along, exhibited this tempting white paper parcel most conspicuously to the view of the passers-by, amongst which was a group of boys on the watch, as boys always are on Valentine's night, to snatch valentines; and this packet looked so like a valentine, or valentines, that its fate, especially as it was only guarded by a boy, was soon decided upon; and in the twinkling of an eye the parcel disappeared out of the hand of its holder, and the boy who stole it vanished as speedily from the sight.* Even his companions wondered at the celerity with which he had vanished, and pursued him to his own home; but he was too cunning to go thither; and repairing to the house of a woman, to whose daughter, a pretty girl of fourteen, this hopeful boy had promised to bring all the valentines he could get,—he found his young favourite eagerly watching for him, her mother being gone out to tea, and with delighted alacrity they began to break the seals of a supposed valentine to "Miss Clermont." But still another seal impeded the gratification of their curiosity; and they had only just opened it, and discovered to their great disappointment that it was nothing but a letter, containing opened letters and notes, when Norris, who was a lodger in the house, came down stairs, and luckily with her spectacles on. As soon as the young thief saw her, a feeling of conscious error, perhaps, caused him to endeavour to gather together and hide the papers, and this action made Norris suspect that all was not right; advancing, therefore, to the table, she sternly asked them what they were doing with those papers, and where they got them; and as she did this, her eye glanced on the signature of "John Melvyn," and on the address to "Miss Clermont!"

"What do I see?" cried Norris, instantly seizing Melvyn's letter, and as many of the notes as her trembling hand could hold. But she had not read many lines, before she fell on her knees, and loudly thanked God for having made her the means to restore the lost reputation of her master's child, and bring down vengeance on her enemies!

"Child!" said she to the astonished boy, "I fear you did not come honestly by these; but it sometimes pleases Providence to use bad agents for good ends; and this may prove, even to you, the best night's work you ever did—for these papers will, I doubt not, clear the fame of a most injured lady, and you and I must set off this very night to the seat of the lord her husband, where we shall both be welcome."

The boy still sat in stupid astonishment not unmixed with fear; but the girl, having often heard Mrs. Norris talk of Lady Shirley and her wrongs, (for Norris believed Catherine the most injured of women,) had been reading some of Sophia's notes; and being acute enough to understand immediately the consequence of the discovery of these papers, she eagerly told her young admirer, that Lord Shirley would probably give him a handsome reward for what he had done, and that he would not blame him for the little frolic which had been the means of his procuring them.

Mrs. Norris in the meanwhile was reading and weeping, and sometimes execrating the villany of the person who wrote. "And these wretches," cried she, "destroyed the peace and fame of my sweet young lady! William, go for your father instantly; and let me have a post-chaise ordered this moment, for I will not sleep till I have seen the earl, even if I die the minute after—glad and contented to breathe my last in my old master's service, for it will be joy to him to see his poor child righted!"

To be brief: The parents were convinced that it was necessary for Mrs. Norris to go to Lord Shirley and take their son with her; and in an hour the good old woman was on her road to Lord Shirley's seat.

Though delayed on the road by not finding the people up at the inns, they reached the place of their destination by eight in the morning; and Lord Shirley was informed that Mrs. Norris wished to see him on urgent business.

It was the day fixed for Lord Shirley's departure; and he was trying, in the delightful idea of restoration to the presence of the being he loved best on earth, to forget the painful consciousness that, perhaps, to one half of the world he should appear a man contented to sit down under the sense of his own dishonour,

* Should this incident be thought improbable, I must beg leave to state that it is a *true* one;—A lady, a friend of mine, was carrying a packet of letters designed for London (and to be sent by a private hand next day), through the streets of Norwich on *St. Valentine's Eve*, when a boy suddenly snatched it and ran away with it; and from that time to the present it has never been heard of! The contents of the packet were indeed different from that of the one mentioned above, as they were letters from a most admirable mother to as admirable children.

and take back to his heart the beautiful wanton who had dishonoured him, because he had not strength of mind to live without her. And while all the feelings of injured honour, and a jealous love of reputation indignantly arose at this contemplation of the subject, he felt agonized to think that, whatever was his opinion of Catherine's unblemished innocence, the name and fame of the wife of Lord Shirley, and the mother of Lord Shirley's children, would go down to posterity in at best a questionable light. And Lord Shirley sighed in the bitterness of a wounded spirit, though in a few days he hoped to clasp to his bosom the woman whom he idolized, rendered dearer to him by this long-enforced separation.

At the moment of these mixed thoughts and feelings, the servant delivered a request to be admitted to his presence from the General's faithful old servant.

"Admit her instantly!" cried he, fearing that something had happened to the General; and Norris, followed by her young attendant, tottered into the room.

"Tell me, my good woman, instantly, what has happened," cried the earl, taking her hand, and leading her to a chair, for he found that she was too much agitated to speak.

"*Read!* read these!" cried the good woman, sobbing, "and bless God!"

Lord Shirley took the papers which she held out to him and staggered to a seat; when the well known characters of Sophia Clermont and the signature of Melvyn met his eye. He read Melvyn's letter first, or rather attempted to read it; for its contents were too overwhelming, too full of just reproaches to himself, to be read at once; and rushing into the next room, he vented his mingled feelings of pleasure and pain, of thankfulness and self-reproach, in alternate bursts of prayer and sobs of agony.

I will not attempt to follow him through all the various gradations of feeling which attended his perusal of Sophia's notes, commenting on, and thereby explaining, the means Melvyn took to lead Catherine into the suspicious situations which had destroyed her fame. Suffice, that the exculpation of Catherine was as complete as the most nice and jealous husband could desire, and the inculpation of Melvyn and Sophia Clermont, as entire as their greatest enemies could wish. And there was nothing that gratitude could dictate, or munificence bestow, which Lord Shirley did not promise and secure to the faithful servant who had been instrumental in bringing about so desirable an event.

The first thing that Lord Shirley did when he recovered from his agitation, was to send a copy of Melvyn's letter to his solicitor, to get it copied, and sent to Lord M—— and to the Duchess of C——, desiring that Lord M—— would take counsel's opinion, whether an action for a conspiracy against the countess would not lie against Melvyn and others; not so much from a wish to take vengeance on the calumniators of his wife, but as a means of making her wrongs and innocence better known to the world.

While the earl was thus employed, Melvyn was enduring, and had caused Sophia to share, all the apprehensions which they had so well deserved to experience; for, though the foot-boy kept his own secret concerning the loss of the packet, the person who was to receive it, having had strict orders not to return to London without it, went to Melvyn's lodgings to inquire for it, when it was not arrived at eleven o'clock.

He met Melvyn at the door, who became excessively uneasy when he heard that a parcel which he sent at eight was not yet delivered; and on interrogating his own valet, he was forced to own that he had entrusted it to the care of the foot-boy. The lad was immediately summoned; and after much hesitation and confusion he owned the real fate of this important parcel, and Melvyn was almost in a state of distraction. What was to be done in such an emergency? To cry the packet with a considerable reward for bringing it back appeared the wisest plan, and this was immediately put in practice; but it is unnecessary to add that it was in vain.

The next day he offered a reward to any one who would give the slightest idea of the probable fate of the lost parcel; and the father of the girl for whose sake it had been stolen waited on Melvyn immediately, and informed him that the parcel with all its contents was by that time in the hands of Lord Shirley.

On hearing this, Melvyn could hardly be prevented from laying violent hands on his valet; he did knock down the poor foot-boy and tread on him with savage fury; nor did he seem much disposed to show more mercy to himself; but recollecting that, though he would soon be unable to show his face in England, 'there was living out of Britain,' he resolved to set off for London directly, inform Sophia himself of this decided ruin of their reputation, and, if she was so inclined, leave the kingdom with her for his companion.

He did so. And he arrived at her house most opportunely, as Lord M——, having received Lord Shirley's express early that morning when Sophia's old peer was with him, had communicated its contents to him; and the latter, seeing that Sophia had been the accomplice of the infamous Melvyn, wrote a note immediately, declining the honour of her hand and even of her acquaintance. But, as he gave no reason for this conduct, it remained for Melvyn to explain it; and Sophia, seeing that her expulsion from society was inevitable, and being involved in debt, was glad to escape from England, if possible, with Melvyn for a companion rather than go alone, and in a few

days they were landed for the present at Jersey.

But before I proceed, I wish to narrate the retributive justice which, even in this world, overtook these wretched and guilty beings. The probable restoration of Lord and Lady Shirley to happiness, even greater than they had known before, revived all Melvyn's hate and all Sophia's jealousy; and they very naturally vented those uneasy passions on each other, which they despaired now of venting on the innocent objects of them;—till at last, beggared by her extravagance and worn out by the violence of her temper, Melvyn turned Sophia out to the poverty which she deserved; and she was forced to live on the wages of infamy; while he, as he was going to keep an appointment which he had made with a married woman, was set upon by her husband and brother, and received so severe a blow on the head that he never recovered it, and died in all the agonies of fruitless remorse and guilty terrors.

Sophia, not long after, fell a victim to a blow which she received from a drunken libertine, whose mistress she was; and that sense of a world to come, which she had successfully banished from her mind in life, returned in her last moments only to add new horrors to death.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Lord Shirley thought it was expedient to send a letter to the General, informing him of these good tidings, before he himself set off, as the post would travel faster than he did. And having done that, Lord Shirley set off for Ireland with his children and their nurses. Their journey was as rapid and their voyage as favourable as travelling with children would admit of; and in as short a time as possible, though certainly not short enough to gratify the impatience of the earl, they reached Ireland, and the dark towers of Castle Rock rose to their view. Lord Shirley had sent an outrider to say that he was coming,—yet still he beheld no Lucy or Lord Livesay issuing from the Castle to meet him, or hailing him from its turrets; and his heart died within him when he drew near the very gates of the Castle, and yet was awaited and cheered by no sign of welcome! And he and the children were all alighted and in the Castle hall, before one face save that of the servants met his impatient view.

At last, Lord Livesay, with a forced smile and a tearful eye, entered the apartment, into which the servant led the way, and in a hoarse voice and hurried manner bade the earl welcome to Ireland.

"Welcome! welcome! And do you call this a welcome?" exclaimed Lord Shirley; while Lord Livesay was pressing the tired children in his arms and hiding his agitated face in their bosom. "Where is the General? where is my wife?—where is Catherine?"

"You will see her soon; but she is ill, very ill. Did you not get our letters?"

"No; I got no letters."

"How strange and unfortunate!" He said no more, for Lord Shirley could hear no more; and for a few moments his fears were so great, that they deprived him of the power of trying to ascertain how far those fears were founded. Lucy Merle now entered, and fancied that she had composed her spirits so far as to be able to meet the earl with calmness; but the moment she saw him, and met his sad bewildered eye, she hastened towards him, and leaning her head on his shoulder, sobbed aloud.

"My dearest creature," said Lord Livesay, gently withdrawing her from the agitated husband, "we alarm our dear friend more than we ought. We hope, Shirley, that your angel wife is better."

"Indeed!" replied Lord Shirley with a sort of smile that filled him with horror; then adding, "But where is she? let me see her, where is she?" he ran hastily up the stairs.

"She is not there,—she is not up stairs," cried Lucy.

"Then she is not confined to her bed?" said the earl, eagerly returning. Before Lucy could answer, a door behind him opened, and the General appeared at it. Lord Shirley started, shuddered, and vainly endeavoured to approach him; and the General, finding that he too had flattered himself in thinking that he was sufficiently prepared for the interview, suddenly closed the door.

Lord Shirley did not attempt to follow him. Lucy, who had left the room a minute, now returned to say that Lady Shirley was ready to see him; and opening a door on the ground floor, she bade Lord Shirley enter. He immediately found himself breathing the air almost of a hot-house; and on a bed at the end of the room, and near the fire, he beheld what he could have fancied the ghost of Catherine Shirley. But that pale lip smiled welcome on him; those meagre arms opened to receive him; and, scarcely conscious how he reached the couch, he felt himself folded to the bosom of his long-exiled wife.

"But is it no delusion?—is it indeed you?" said Catherine, looking earnestly, anxiously, and fondly in his face.

Lord Shirley could not, dared not, look on hers; the recollection of her injuries—the consciousness of her illness and her danger,—that illness brought on probably by agony of mind, all came over him with such overwhelming force, that as he leaned his head on her pillow, and his arms dropped powerless from her waist, groans, deep groans, alone proclaimed

that sense and life had not both at once forsaken him.

"Speak to me,—speak to me, my beloved!" cried Catherine; "this dreadful silence kills me."

"Kills you!" exclaimed Lord Shirley, "kills you! I know it,—yes—yes—I know that I have killed you! O, Catherine!—"

Lucy Merle now led in the children; and Catherine, in the exquisite delight of seeing them and folding them to her heart, felt her attention for one moment turned from their unhappy father; when, luckily for Lord Shirley's reason, the sight of the unconscious twins clasped to the bosom of that mother from whom he had so long unjustly separated them, had such a powerful effect on his feelings, that tears burst with hysterical violence from his eyes, and restored him to perception and to calmness. But the sight of their father's agony so terrified the children, that Catherine was forced to resign them to their nurses; and Lucy led them away, promising to bring them back when they were appeased.

"The poor things do not know me yet!" said Catherine; "but they will soon." And as she spoke cheerfully, Lord Shirley tried to believe that all hope was not over. And as he thought this, he ventured to gaze earnestly on her changed but still beautiful face.

"O my love!" cried Catherine, "how kind, how bountiful has Providence been to me! He restores to me my husband, my children, and my reputation, all—all in a few short hours! Precious, indeed, are they all to my soul! but most precious my husband and my children! Yet if it be thy will," she added, raising her eyes to heaven, "thou knowest that I am willing to resign them."

"To resign us? Cruel Catherine! how can you talk of resignation to such a trial?"

"Because, my dearest lord, I have always considered this world only as a state of probation for another, and that trials are to be looked upon as favours from the Giver of all good, if borne with thankfulness and endured with patience, and as touchstones of our real faith in the mercy and goodness of Providence. To have died, my beloved Shirley, with fortitude and resignation, when I was an alien to your heart, an exile from you and my dear children, and lost to reputation and to happiness, would have been no proof of my love and gratitude to my Creator; but to be willing to obey his summons when every thing that is most precious in life is mine again,—*that* is a sacrifice worthy to be offered by a christian spirit; and, hard as the struggle is, I *hope* I shall be enabled to prove myself equal to it."

"But I am not able to endure it, nor ever shall be. Talk not thus, Catherine, unless you wish to distract me! I cannot part with you; dear as you always were, you are far dearer to me now that I hold you thus pale, thus meagre, to my heart, than when I held you there in all the pride of health and beauty! And can you talk or think of being willing to leave me? True, I do not deserve you; true, I never did deserve you. But, Oh! to think what a happy being I was when I arose to-day! In a few hours I expected to see you, blooming, gay, tender and happy! And I find you—" Here his voice failed him, and he was forced to cease his frenzied and mournful eloquence.

"And you find me," said Catherine gently, "not well, not blooming,—but tender and happy. For, while consciousness is spared me, I must be happy while I see you and my dear infants, and reflect that every blot on my fair fame it has pleased Heaven to wipe away. Besides, you know that while there is life, there is hope."

"And do you really hope, Catherine?"

"At times I do; and so do all my friends. And will you, my dear lord, be the only one to insist upon despairing! Remember, we usually expect what we wish! and if you are so contented to despair, I shall suspect that you do not wish to hope."

Catherine tried to smile while she said this, but she could not do it. There was an expression in Lord Shirley's countenance that she could not endure; and complaining that she was rather faint, while she closed her eyes to shut out his wild and agonized look, she laid her head on the pillow, and begged to be left with Lucy Merle.

When Lord Shirley had left them, Catherine said, "My dear friend, I feel that it is the will of my Creator that I should suffer greatly in my departure hence. My own sufferings either of body or of mind I could bear, and I trust have borne with patience; but the sight of what my husband feels, and the thought of what he will still feel, is what at present I cannot bear with becoming resignation; but I trust that I shall be enabled by prayer to obtain the necessary fortitude, and that help will not be withheld when most I need it. Now, Lucy, go to my dear lord, and tell him that I am trying to compose myself awhile that I may be better able to enjoy his society." Lucy, too full of heart to utter one word, only kissed her now crimson cheek, and withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

When Lord Shirley left Catherine's apartment, he was met in the hall by Lord Livesay, with the General leaning on his arm; and the latter was now able to utter some kind of welcome, though the earl could not help feeling that the affectionate cordiality which had once subsisted between him and his venerable relation, was, on the side of the General, gone,

probably, for ever. Nor could he wonder that it was so, as General Shirley had always done that justice to Catherine which he unfortunately had denied her.

Lord Shirley, after his first emotions on this meeting had subsided, had innumerable questions to ask relative to Catherine and her illness. "But why," asked he, "was she not instantly removed on her first seizure, from this cold situation to a more genial air?"

"Because she was at first too weak to bear the exertion."

"But what advice has she?"

"A young physician, but of considerable eminence, has been here a week, whom we sent for express from Dublin."

"How long has she been ill?"

"Dangerously, only a fortnight. And you see that by letting her sleep over the kitchen, and by flues, we have contrived to make her breathe an air so warm, that, even could she be moved to a warmer climate, she would be less injured by staying where she is. In short, my lord," said Lucy, solemnly, "we have done all that human means could do, and we must humbly and confidingly leave the rest to Providence. But her poor mother died you know of—"

"I know it, I know it," interrupted Lord Shirley, striking his forehead with his hand, and walking up and down the room,—"and *her* complaint was hastened if not brought on by uneasiness of mind."

"But our dear Lady Shirley's uneasiness is now at an end," kindly observed Lord Livesay; "and as she has so much youth and so much strength, we have great reason to hope."

Lucy smiled affectionately on the well-meant soothing; while Lord Shirley exclaimed, "But what says the physician?" And nothing but seeing him that instant could pacify his emotion.

That gentleman was gone to get a few hours repose, as he was to sit up that night. Luckily, however, he was already up again and dressed, when the servant went to inform him that the earl wished to see him, and he obeyed his summons in the room appropriated to him.

Not all his kind wish of speaking peace to the agonized apprehensions of Lord Shirley could allow him to give his interrogator the degree of hope he desired; and Lord Shirley returned to his sympathizing companions, with a countenance of the deepest dejection.

Soon after, with Dr. ——'s permission, Lord Shirley obeyed Catherine's summons, and hastened again to her bedside. He found her quite calm; but he almost started as he beheld the ghastly paleness of her cheek.

"My dear lord," said she, extending to him her thin and burning hand, "I have much to say to you, much of importance in my opinion to your welfare and mine, both here and hereafter; and I have great comfort in the thought that you love me too well to deny me what may be my very last request."

"Deny you! deny you any thing!" replied Lord Shirley in a voice nearly inarticulate from emotion; "O Catherine!"

"No—I do not think it likely that you will," she answered, with a smile of former days. "Now then to prefer my petition. In a short time I am going to take the sacrament; and it is my wish that you and all my friends should take it with me. But how can I do this, unless I prove to myself and to others that you do the same—that we forgive all those who have ever trespassed against us, as we hope to have our own trespasses forgiven?"

"I see what you are going to say, Catherine," cried Lord Shirley, rising; "but I charge you to recollect that Justice is a virtue as well as Mercy."

"True; but leave the infliction of it to the Almighty. Frail man, who needs so much mercy himself, should always be eager to show it to others; and I conjure you to forgive, as I do, the crimes of Melvyn and that unhappy woman against us, as I myself forgive them."

"Forgive them! Yes, I do, I trust, forgive them; still it is a duty I owe the public to bring them to punishment, that they may be deprived of their power of injuring others."

"But if you did *not* forgive them you could do no more.—And how can you be sure that you do indeed forgive them, when your actions towards them are those of unforgiveness and revenge? O! my dearest Shirley! we but deceive ourselves, and our hearts are strangers to real forgiveness, when we do not by some overt action *prove* that we forgive. I grant you that they ought to be prevented from doing further injury; and this will be done sufficiently by the publication of the letters and notes, a step necessary not only to expose them, but to clear my sullied name; and that will be sufficient to drive them from society. O do not then, do not, I conjure you by that holy one who died for *them* as well as for *us*,—do not call down upon their heads the penalties of the law, but let them depart into obscurity unpunished except by the consciousness of universal contempt."

"It cannot be, because it ought not to be; and I am sure that the General will not consent if *I* do—it was such atrocious, such almost unnatural wickedness!"

"It was wickedness which certainly could not have succeeded as it did, had I done my duty. I ought not, I fear, to have married you with a secret on my mind that I could not reveal; and however repugnant to my feelings, I ought to have told you every thing relative to my meetings with Melvyn as soon as ever I saw you, and then you could not have been led to suspect me by the artifice of others."

"I cannot bear to hear you blame yourself," cried Lord Shirley; "*I* and I only was to blame. For who that knew you as I did, except my guilty self, could have believed you criminal even for one moment?—and never, never before, did so pure and holy a being suffer so much as you have done."

"My mother," replied Catherine, "deserved more than I did, and suffered as much, and longer."

"Your mother? O talk not so, my beloved! Your mother lived many happy years with a husband who deserved her, for he truly appreciated her worth; and Catherine, she lived to witness and enjoy the early virtues of her matchless child. Your mother suffer like you! No, no; for William Shirley was not such a husband as I was. Noble, tender, faithful, consistent creature! how must he have been consoled, when he held her dying and dead in his fond arms, to know that his heart had ever felt towards her the same undiminished esteem and love, and that he had never caused her to endure the greatest pang an affectionate woman can know—the consciousness of having lost the confidence of the husband of her heart! I tell you, Catherine, your mother was blest in life, and blest in death! and you!—"

"Shall be blest in death, whatever I may have been in life," said Catherine, solemnly, "if you will grant me the boon I ask. O my dear lord! how do we know but that when these wretched persons are told, as I entreat they may be, that their poor victim forgave and prayed for them,—how do we know, I say, what effect on their benighted hearts this proof of the power of the Christian faith may not produce! Who knows but that their awakened consciences may lead them to the feet of their Creator? O, Shirley! would it not be a sweet, a glorious thing, in the exertion of *our* Christian duty, to teach such sinners *theirs?* And if by my death I can hope to save these souls from perdition, think you that I can consider my death otherwise than a blessing?"

As she said this, the eyes of Catherine were rendered so brilliant by the pious hope that her lips uttered, and her voice and manner became so irresistibly persuasive, that Lord Shirley's resolution gave way, and he was moved by her entreaties, however unconvinced by her arguments; for he believed the hearts of Melvyn and Sophia incapable of being moved to penitence, even by virtue and piety like Catherine's.

"You have conquered," said he at length, when the various emotions to which her words had given birth had in a degree subsided—"You have conquered—I will withdraw the prosecution; and these unhappy wretches shall know that they owe my lenity to the entreaties of their victim." But this last word was almost inaudible.

Catherine, on hearing what he said, exclaimed, "My God, I thank thee!" in a tone so fervent and affecting, that Lord Shirley was again moved to salutary tears. And after bestowing on him the fondest and tenderest caresses, Catherine desired the chaplain to be called; and that the General, Lord Livesay, and Lucy might be summoned to her apartment.

"I have carried my point with Shirley," cried Catherine as soon as she saw her grandfather; "and now, my dear sir, you can hesitate no longer."

"I do not hesitate," replied the General.

"Then now," added Catherine, "with what satisfied hearts we may partake together of this holy rite!"

As soon as the ceremony was over, which Catherine alone went through with any thing like firmness, she grasped Lord Shirley's hand, and said, "this, my dear lord, ought to be considered as our second wedding feast; but of more value than the first, as I trust that it secures our eternal re-union, 'where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.'"

Then seeing that Lord Shirley and her other auditors were too much distressed to speak, she urged her lord and the General to leave her, declaring her wish to compose herself for the night. And after a farewell, prolonged almost to agony by apprehensive affection, they slowly and reluctantly withdrew.

As the door was about to close on Lord Shirley, Catherine raised herself on the bed, and looked fondly after him.—"Let me see him as long as I can," she exclaimed; "and but for his sake I would not suffer him from my sight while my eyes are able to behold him. But this were selfishness; and it were better perhaps for him that we should meet no more, and that this parting were our last." Then hearing Lucy sob, she said, "Forgive me, Lucy, I forgot that you were present; I thought that I had been alone, or I should not have talked thus. Now give me my last dose of medicine, and leave me, I charge you, to my nurse and my physician."

Though Lord Shirley was not allowed to remain with Catherine, no bed received him, nor could he even try to rest, though Lucy had ordered him an apartment at the other end of the Castle, that he might hear no noise; and the sound of his restless footstep was constantly heard breaking the silence of night.

Frequently did he leave his chamber to make inquiries concerning Catherine. But he learnt nothing new or satisfactory till the General burst into his room in the morning, and with a countenance of pleasure, though his eyes were filled with tears, exclaimed, "Joy, joy, Lionel! we really begin to hope now! She is up,—she is dressed,—and looking so well and happy! It will do your heart good to see her!"

It was too much for the exhausted nerves

of the earl; and staggering to the bed, it was some minutes before he could rise superior to the overwhelming and sudden succession of hope to despair.

"But may I go to her?" said he at length.

"Go to her? To be sure! she has sent me to fetch you." And in a moment, refreshed, and unconscious of the night he had passed, the now relieved husband found himself in the chamber of Catherine.

She was indeed up, and dressed; and with a countenance radiant with smiles, and eyes lighted up by the brilliant colour on her cheeks, while she turned looks of love on her children, who were playing on the ground beside her, and Lord Livesay was watching Lucy's countenance, in order to read in it, if possible, whether hope or fear was to be the result of this apparent amendment.

Lord Shirley could not speak when he saw her, but his countenance spoke volumes.

"There," said Catherine, rising to meet him, and with more strength than she had exhibited for days, "there comes my best and true physician. It is his presence, and that of those dear ones, that has done this. They are the medicines I wanted;—it was for them that I pined—I have them, and all is well again. But you came just in time; had you delayed even a day longer, you would have been too late."

As she said this, the General glanced his eye towards Lucy, and saw almost with anger that *her* look was as mournful and desponding as ever; and he rather pettishly exclaimed, "Surely, Miss Merle, you must think Lady Shirley better? I wish the physician was not gone to bed, that he might confirm our hopes."

"She does seem better, certainly," replied Lucy gravely.

"Seems, Lucy! Nay, I am—'I know not seems,'" replied Catherine, smiling. "But really you look so solemn, and are such a *memento mori*, that I must order you away. I declare, if she were not an engaged woman, Shirley, I should suspect Lucy wished me gone that she might succeed me in your heart, so averse does she appear to believe me better."

This was a pleasantry so unlike the usual manner and style of Catherine, that poor Lucy was more certain than before that Catherine was under the influence of fever; and she dared not hope herself, while she shuddered to see how deluded and how happy were the husband and the grandfather.

"How well I look! do I not, Shirley?" said Catherine, "such a cosmetic is happiness! O Shirley! the first glance of your kind eye, the eye of former days, was sufficient to revive me. 'He loves me! he loves me as well as ever!' said I to myself; and that dear, that precious glance, haunted me through the night. I saw it in my dreams when I slept, and when I awoke it seemed to beam health and happiness upon me."

"My dearest love, you talk so much that you will exhaust yourself," said Lord Shirley, who gazed on her sweet and tender countenance with unutterable fondness.

"Dear Lady Shirley, you must be more quiet," observed Lucy, "or you will suffer for it."

"Hush, raven, hush!" replied Catherine, playfully putting her hand to Lucy's lips.

Lucy held it there some time; then relinquishing it, she burst into tears.

"Well," said Catherine, "if I did not know that joy has its tears as well as grief, Lucy's streaming eyes would depress me; but I will not look at her. No; she is the dark sky; but you, my lord, and my smiling children there, are the rainbow that illumines it; and who would look at the gloom, that could see the many-tinted iris? Not I indeed."

Here she paused; for, in spite of her efforts, she now spoke with difficulty.

"Raise me up, my dearest lord," she said after a pause, "raise me up, and I shall breathe better."

Lord Shirley did raise her, and so high upon his bosom, that her lip as she raised her head nearly rested on his. At this moment, Catherine fixed her eyes on Lord Shirley's with an expression of tenderness which went to his very soul.

"I am better, much better now," she faintly articulated. Then, pressing her lips to his, her head sunk upon his breast, and in a few moments the wretched husband discovered that he had entertained hope only to feel more acutely the poignancy of despair, and that he held nothing but a corpse in his arms.

END OF VALENTINE'S EVE.

NEW TALES.

MRS. ARLINGTON,

OR

ALL IS NOT GOLD THAT GLITTERS.

"To whom does that house belong?" said Mrs. Derville to a countryman passing by, as she was returning from London to her home in a distant county, accompanied by her daughter Jane, a girl of eighteen, Mary Ann, a child eight years old, and Lionel Derville, her son, a youth just turned of twenty.

"That house belongs to one Madam Arlington," replied the man, "and all that land as far as you can see, and those woods yonder going down almost to the sea-shore."

"What a beautiful place!" exclaimed Jane.

"And it seems more beautiful the nearer we approach to it," observed her mother.

"Look, mamma! look!" cried little Mary Ann, "what a fine garden there is under those windows! I smell the flowers even here."

"How I should like to live there!" observed Lionel.

"What an enviable woman Mrs. Arlington must be!" returned his mother, with a sigh.

"Enviable indeed!" echoed her children, as the road wound round this earthly paradise, and at every fresh view seemed to exhibit new beauties. It was indeed a lovely spot. The house, large even to magnificence, stood on a terrace midway up a very lofty and richly wooded hill, behind which, from a hill opposite, the ocean was seen at no great distance, and it formed the grand and interesting view from the back part of the mansion.

The front, on the contrary, looked upon a soft and peaceful scene. At the bottom of the terrace a clear and gentle river flowed through a verdant lawn, which was skirted by a rich shrubbery; along either side of the house a gay and fragrant parterre attracted the eye by its brilliancy, and gratified the senses by its sweets; while hot-houses, green-houses, and other buildings, constructed so as to ornament the grounds by their architectural beauty, spoke at once the opulence and the taste of the lady of the mansion.

"What happiness it must be to live there!" ever and anon broke from the lips of the travellers.

"It must, indeed! and I really envy Mrs. Arlington," said the thoughtful Mrs. Derville as she gave a last look to the splendid domain; and sunk into silence.

The abode of Mrs. Arlington was indeed in size and grandeur a contrast to that of Mrs. Derville! but in beauty of situation and in real comfort the rectory over which Mrs. Derville presided could bear comparison with any abode whatever, and till hitherto she had always thought so herself. What had so changed her ideas on the subject? A legacy, a journey to London, and a six weeks' residence there.

At the age of sixteen Mrs. Derville was an admired beauty in the country circle in which she moved; and her charms, both of person and mind, combined with the respectability of her birth and the excellence of her fortune, made a union with her as desirable in point of prudence and ambition as in taste. Amongst many lovers she had two who were a complete contrast to each other in worldly pretensions; for one was infinitely her superior in fortune, and the other as much beneath her. The one had a mansion and estates equal to those of Mrs. Arlington; to the other might be applied the words of the old ballad,

"Wisdom and worth were all he had;"

and Anne Pointz could have added,

"And they were all to me;"

for, consulting nothing but her heart, she gave herself and her wealth to Mr. Derville, who had just entered the church; and when he was old enough to take priest's orders she presented him to a living which was part of her fortune.

And every day convinced Mrs. Derville of the wisdom of her choice, since every day discovered some new virtue in Derville, whenever he appeared in any new situation.

To the fond husband succeeded the affectionate father, and the exemplary teacher to others of those holy precepts by which his own life was fashioned; and three lovely children had cemented still more the tie of conjugal affection, when a noble relation, who had been too proud to notice Mrs. Derville during her lifetime, left her at her death a considerable legacy in money, together with a share of the clothes, furniture, &c., of which share she was to be allowed her choice.

It was therefore requisite for Mrs. Derville to go to London; and it was with an aching heart that Derville assured her he could not accompany her, because he could get no one to perform his parish duties for him during an absence probably of many weeks.

He had another reason for giving up all idea of leaving home, which he tenderly and wisely concealed from his wife; not only in order to spare her certain and unnecessary anxiety, but to secure her own and her children's safety. A low and infectious fever had just broken out in the village, and Derville knew that if his affectionate wife was aware

of the circumstance she would either insist on staying to share his duties and his dangers, or she would have gone to London and remained there in a state of constant alarm concerning him and the children whom she had left behind. The necessity of a journey to London therefore was rendered doubly fortunate in Mr. Derville's eyes by this alarming malady; as, by prevailing on his wife to take all her family with her, he should place them all beyond the reach of infection.

He consequently took every possible precaution to keep the knowledge of the fever from his wife; and as it had only as yet shown itself at the extremity of the parish, he succeeded in his attempt; and he contrived to prevent her and the children from paying their accustomed visits to the cottages of the poor, on pretence that all their time would be wanted to prepare for their journey, which ought, he said, on every account, to be undertaken immediately. It was not, however, without sensations of fond agony, which he found it very difficult to conceal, that Derville beheld them thus preparing for a separation which might, he knew, be eternal in this world; and when, after such struggles and such tears as were likely to attend their *first* parting, Derville saw the carriage drive off which conveyed from his sight those he tenderly loved, he experienced pangs which nothing but the conviction that he was doing his duty could have enabled him to endure; for he was conscious that in his necessary attendance on the sick he might imbibe the contagion, and sink under its power, "and then," said he, clasping his hands in agony, "I shall never see those dear ones again!"

But there is no trial which a firm reliance on the only support that cannot be taken away will not teach any one to bear and even to triumph over. "And my wife, my children, will be spared, and saved by this journey," he exclaimed; "there is comfort in *that* assurance;" though ever and anon he could not but recollect that on this journey, which he had so eagerly welcomed, dangers might attend, though of a *different nature*, as great as those from which he had successfully endeavoured to guard them.

The travellers reached the metropolis in safety on the third day at noon; and as they had never left home before, except to go to a watering place in the neighbourhood, the eternal bustle and crowding in the streets of London, which they entered at the city end, had their usual effect on being entered the first time; and while Mrs. Derville, her son, and elder daughter, beheld every thing in a sort of silent wonder, the little girl of eight years old was in one constant exclamation of childish delight. A lodging had been procured for them by the solicitor, who was the executor of Lady Anne Pointz, the lady by whose will Mrs. Derville was so much benefited; and it was taken in the neighbourhood of Cavendish square, near his own house, as, though his office was in the city, he resided in Edward street.

Nothing material occurred on the first or second day of their arrival, as Mrs. Derville was not quite well after her journey, and had nothing so much at heart as to write an account of her feelings and those of her children, on the road and on beholding London, to the beloved being whom she had left. And though she felt that she did not come to the metropolis to think only of her husband and to write to him, still while finding herself wholly amongst strangers, and alone in a *crowd*, a feeling forlorn as well as fond impelled her to turn towards the home which she had quitted, and to seek comfort by recalling it and its master perpetually to her view.

Happy was it for her peace that she did not even suspect the danger to which that beloved being was exposed. She was not to go to the house of death and see the treasures which awaited her there, till Lady Lucy Donellan—who like herself was second cousin to the deceased, and was to have the half of the clothes and furniture which she left—should be able to accompany her, and she was then confined to her house with a cold. In the meanwhile Mrs. Derville expected to be able to furnish herself and children with proper mourning before she saw that lady. But Lady Lucy Donellan was so eager to see the things destined for her possession, and also by calling on her copartner in the legacy to discover whether she could not take advantage of her simplicity, that early on the third day after their arrival, and at the risk of her health, Lady Lucy drove up to Mrs. Derville's door.

Lady Lucy had not, at that moment, resolved what line of conduct to pursue; she knew not yet whether she should awe the country parson's wife, as she called her, by the repelling dignity of superior rank, and thereby make her compliant to her wishes; or charm her into a desire to oblige her noble associate, by excessive and condescending graciousness. She concluded that neither Mrs. Derville nor her grown-up son and daughter were presentable at her house; still she thought it would be best to invite them to dinner, but ask only some dependants to meet them, to whom she should not be ashamed of showing at her table a gawky, awkward milkmaidish, ill-dressed woman, and her still more gawky and ill-favoured offspring.

Nor was this important point decided in her mind, when she got out of the carriage. Mrs. Derville, who sat in a back room, did not hear the carriage stop; and as the street door stood quite open, she did not discover that the footman's loud knock was at her house; nor indeed could she well attend to any noise at that moment, as she was singing an Italian canon with Lionel and Jane, which

had been taught them by a lady whom they had first met at a watering-place, and who had since been a frequent guest at their house. This lady, finding they had each of them fine voices and good ears, had taken the trouble to impart to them much of her own knowledge of singing, and had taught them the rare accomplishment of singing correctly in parts.

Therefore, as Lady Lucy set her foot on the first step of the stairs it was arrested by amazement, for she had heard too much good music not to know that what she now heard was sweet and in tune; and she began to think she had mistaken the door; but the footman, whom Mrs. Derville had hired for the time they stayed in town, assured her it was his ladies and the young gentleman who were singing; and with a respect for the country parson's family, which she never expected to feel, she entered the room.

Mrs. Derville had too much simplicity of character, if not dignity of mind, to be embarrassed by a visit from a woman of quality. She had never felt sufficient respect for mere titles, to be flattered and fluttered into awkwardness on receiving an unexpected call from a noble guest; and to Lady Lucy's increased amazement, Mrs. Derville and her daughter both met her with as much ease, though with a heightened bloom, as if she had been only their equal. But her amazement did not end *there*; for if her ear had been charmed with their voices, her eye was equally so with their personal graces; and even before the first compliments were over, and Lady Lucy was quietly seated in her chair, she had convinced herself that her new friends were not only *presentable* at her parties, but a desirable *acquisition* to them; and as it was then July, when something new was particularly precious, as the early wonders of the season were ceasing to be wonderful and to attract, Lady Lucy resolved that Mrs. Derville (a beautiful country lady, the near relation and legatee of Lady Anne Pointz, with her lovely and accomplished daughter, and her handsome son, who all sung like angels) should be the theme of her praises for the next week, and that at the end of it she would make a party on purpose for them, and to introduce them into the fine world.

For a time, indeed, the interests of her party banished the recollection of the interests of her avarice; but the latter passion soon returned, and she had now at length determined to promote them by the arts of insinuation, not the power of superiority; indeed, she soon saw that the "*country parson's wife*" was not a woman to be awed into any thing. Accordingly, she used every art of flattery to please, and *succeeded*. Glee succeeded to glee, duet to duet; and the accomplishment which had before been valued chiefly as it charmed a husband's and father's ear, became from Lady Lucy's praises, only too precious to them as a passport, according to her, into circles which they never expected to enter. The personal beauty of the group was not forgotten; and though she could not exclaim openly concerning the loveliness of the elder part of the family—though Mrs. Derville, at thirty-seven, looked like her daughter's elder sister, and Jane Derville, was very like her still beautiful mother,—Lady Lucy could venture to go into raptures concerning the beauty of the little girl, and then declared she was the very image of her mother and her sister; "and, indeed, so is your son, Mrs. Derville, except that his eyes are dark, and his complexion is more ruddy, and his look and person are *manly*." Here was language for the ears of unsophisticated beings, who, though they knew that they possessed personal beauty, had not learned to value themselves upon it;—but sweet is the language of flattery; and as they were sincere themselves, they believed in Lady Lucy's sincerity, and thought her praise disinterested. *Sincere* it *certainly* was; and as Lady Lucy knew the effect of *new faces* and *pretty* faces in the London world, she anticipated so much *eclat* to her next select *petit souper* from the introduction of these novelties, that her spirits became quite elevated; and she was so entertaining, that when she left them, the Dervilles were delighted to think they should see her again the next day. The next day she did come, and took Mrs. Derville to a fashionable milliner to bespeak her mourning, and directed the young Derville to a fashionable tailor; and then they proceeded with the executor to look over the wardrobe and furniture of the deceased. I shall only add, that Lady Lucy obtained all she wanted; and, in return, she took the Dervilles to her box at the Opera, procured them a private box at both houses two other evenings in the week;—in short they thought her the kindest of human beings. And while Derville was, at the risk of his life, kneeling and praying beside the bed of death, and furnishing from his own stores the wine and medicines necessary for the indigent, the diseased and the dying, his lovely wife's letters told of operas, concerts, and plays; of praises from lords, of invitations from ladies, and of singing with her children before noble judges and rival amateurs. Nor could he sometimes help saying to himself—"Have I not in my blind wisdom exposed these dear ones to greater danger than awaited them here!—that moral contagion which is full of the *worst* death." But then he recollected that principles, and good and pious habits are not lost in a moment; and he also remembered that they were only to stay a month in London.

The end of that month was however arrived; and Mrs. Derville, to please herself as well as Jane and Lionel, was just going to request leave to stay a week longer in the metropolis, when Derville wrote to desire that

they would prolong their stay to five weeks,—a request with which they were very glad to comply, though Mrs. Derville experienced a feeling somewhat approaching to mortification, at her husband being desirous, unurged by her, to lengthen the term of their separation. Little did she know that this desire was only a new proof of his affection, as he was fearful that the infection which he had providentially escaped, might not be sufficiently overcome to make their return as yet a matter of safety to themselves. However, the mortification was but for a moment, and the permission was a source of lasting satisfaction, as the week was to be passed in a round of pleasant engagements. It proved also as delightful in reality as it had been in expectation; and there was only one of the family who pined for the country, and did not think London the most delightful place in the world. That person was little Anna, who went to bed when the others went to parties, and who thought the garden in Cavendish-square a bad place to walk in compared to that at her own dear home; and had it not been for the pleasure which the fine shops afforded her, and the sight of the carriages and the crowd, the poor child would have been miserable during a residence which gave the rest of her family considerable enjoyment.

The last two days of their permitted stay at length arrived, and found them as unwilling to go as ever; and maternal ambition and maternal fondness, added to the personal pleasure which Mrs. Derville herself felt at seeing herself followed and admired in the new world of fashion, made her resolve to desire leave to stay another week.

The truth was, that a nobleman of very pleasing manners and exterior, had paid Jane the most marked attention; and his admiration of her was so evident, that, as she found her daughter was strongly prejudiced in his favour, she had little doubt but that he meant to make her an offer of his hand; and that her beauty and her voice would, in the usual phrase, make her fortune, as they had done those of other young women, who were neither so well born nor so highly connected as she was.

It is certain that Jane expected the same thing; and the image of a young curate in the vicinity of Lovelands, who had her father's leave to gain her affections if he could, gradually became fainter and fainter; and the love which had made some progress in her heart before the London journey, was now every day receiving another and another check from the power of ambition. She therefore was very eager to remain longer in London; and her brother was equally so, from the pride and the pleasure which he derived from the great attention paid him by Sir Mordaunt Williams, a young baronet, who, though they knew it not, was well known on the turf, and remarkable for his profligacy. Urged, therefore, by their wishes and her own, Mrs. Derville, though not without some feeling of remorseful tenderness and reluctance, promised her children to write to their father, and beg to stay to the beginning of the second week in August.

The letter was written, but not sent, when the carriage drove up that was to convey them to an assembly at the house of Lady Lucy Donellan,—and thither they went.

As usual, Lord N. (the nobleman mentioned above) stationed himself at the side of Jane; and as he was a man of considerable talents, and of much weight in the circles of high life as well as in the senate, Lady Lucy was flattered to have him at her parties, and was pleased to find the rural beauty had power to attract him constantly to her house.

Young Derville too, as usual, found his new friend in the gay group, who, hanging on his arm, led the flattered youth up and down the suite of rooms. It was the first time the Dervilles had seen Lady Lucy's elegant rooms thrown open *en suite;* and the beauty of the apartments, the brilliancy of the lights, and the splendour of the dresses, made this evening, in its commencement, the most gratifying of the sort which she had ever yet passed in London.

Mrs. Derville herself might have had her constant *cecisbeo* if she had been willing to sacrifice principle to vanity; as she was not only the object of admiration to men whom she had never seen before, but the lover whom in early life she had rejected for the sake of love and Derville, was frequently in her society, and took every opportunity of convincing her that in Mrs. Derville he had not forgotten the beautiful Anne Pointz; and as he was now elevated to the dignity of the peerage, his attentions might naturally be supposed by himself to be flattering to her pride, however repugnant it was to her principles to receive them.

But not even gratitude for his pretended persevering attachment, nor the whispers of vanity, had power to gain him more than a smile of civility from the object of his early love. Still there were times when she wished that her lot had been cast in higher scenes than those in which she moved at home, and she would have hailed with joy her husband's elevation in the church. One must forgive her this weakness for the sake of her well-principled rejection of her noble lover's renewal of attention, especially as that attention was so respectful, that a woman less rigidly correct might have thought herself justified in receiving it, as she might have said to herself, "It can mean no harm."

But to return to this evening at Lady Lucy's. Mrs. Derville was standing near her daughter, when the ever attentive Lord N. proposed to her and another young lady to go

down into the refreshment room; and they had nearly reached the door before Mrs. Derville was aware of their departure. She, however, felt it her duty as a mother to follow them, but the crowd at the door was so great that she was detained some minutes; and in the meanwhile her parental vanity was gratified by seeing her truly handsome son leaning on the arm of one of the most admired young men in high life.

But though Lady Lucy had declared that he was reckoned the handsomest young man of the day, Mrs. Derville could not be blind to the superiority of Lionel in personal beauty, though he was his inferior in elegance and air, as the bloom of youth unimpaired by excess was on Lionel's cheek, and the open expression of a heart unconscious of evil beamed on his manly countenance.

At this moment an elderly man near her said to the gentleman next him, "Who is that new victim whom Sir Mordaunt has seized upon?"

"Victim! What do you mean, Sir Thomas?"

"I mean that it is destruction to any young man to be taken notice of and flattered by Sir Mordaunt; for he will inevitably teach him his own vices, and lead him certainly to the gaming-table."

"I fear you are right," was the answer.

"I know I am. But do tell me the name of that poor youth? He looks so good, so innocent, at present, that I wish he did not seem so pleased with his companion."

"He is indeed quite a novice," said the other, "and the son of a lady just come up from the country, who is introduced by Lady Lucy Donellan."

"Poor woman!" cried the good-natured observer. "Is there no one kind enough to put her on her guard, and tell her to prevent any further intimacy between her son and that dangerous young man? From Lady Lucy I *know* such disinterested kindness is not to be expected."

Though this fortunate conversation had passed in a low voice, Mrs. Derville had heard it all, and with feelings not difficult to be imagined; but the last sentence nearly overpowered her; and she could scarcely help turning round and saying, urged by an impulse of grateful emotion, "The poor woman *is* put on her guard now, and God bless you sir!" But she had power to restrain herself from speaking, though not from turning round; and as she looked on the warning speaker with a glistening eye and a glowing cheek, and with an expression of gratitude which could not be mistaken, he suspected who she was, and on inquiry found that he was right. At first he felt glad at having been unintentionally the means of enabling a parent to save her child from destruction; but he was a man of the world; and being afraid, by Mrs. Derville's manner, that she had a great mind to introduce herself to him and make some inquiries concerning Sir Mordaunt, which he might get into a difficulty by answering, he took care to remove from her sight as fast as possible; especially as a friend of his had just addressed him, in Mrs. Derville's hearing, by the name of Sir Thomas Waring. It was time then for him to disappear, as Mrs. Derville already knew more than he liked, in knowing that her authority for telling her son—as he concluded she would do—that his elegant friend was a dangerous and unprincipled man, was Sir Thomas Waring. "And really," thought he, "it would be very silly in me to embroil myself with Sir Mordaunt and his family for the sake of persons of whom I know nothing; and after all, it is *no business of mine*." So felt, so reasoned the man of the world; and he was seen no more that evening. In the meanwhile Mrs. Derville, urged on by the crowd, reached the refreshment-room on the ground floor, and saw Jane listening delightedly to the conversation of the agreeable Lord N. But being satisfied by having her daughter in her sight, she did not force herself through the crowd to join her, as she saw a vacant place at the table of refreshments; and having asked for a glass of ice, she considered, while eating it, what would be the best manner of withdrawing her son from the intimacy to which, she doubted not, a stop must be immediately put. While her thoughts were thus employed, her back was turned to two ladies, who like herself were eating ice; and she heard one of them say to the other, "There, don't you see? there is Lord N. as usual flirting away with that pretty girl."

"Yes, he is always with her now—who is she?"

"She is the daughter of a Mrs. Derville, a relation and legatee of Lady Anne Pointz; but I do not see her in the room to-night."

"That is strange! it is very improper, indeed, in her to let her daughter go about thus without her."

"Oh! but she is an ignorant country lady, and cannot be supposed to think that any harm can come from the intimacy of a girl in her teens with a married man of fifty. But you and I, who know Lord N., also know that we could not trust the affections of a daughter of ours with a more dangerous man."

Never was surprise greater than that of Mrs. Derville. Lord N. a married man! It could not be! And the ladies having called for more ice, she still lingered near them in hopes they would continue their conversation; and they resumed it thus: "Look, look! how the poor girl blushes, and how pleased she seems! Well, I am glad it is not my daughter, that's all! Really, if Lord N. were a single man, I should think he was absolutely caught now; but married he is, and will remain so, I can tell him; for I saw Lady N.

yesterday, looking as well and as young as when they parted twenty years ago."

"Do not tell him so," replied the other, "if you mean to be in favour with him, and wish him to come to your next party." And then, without seeing Mrs. Derville, they left the room. Wonder, resentment, and disappointment, now triumphed alternately in the mind of Mrs. Derville; but resentment was at length the predominant feeling; for, as Lord N. was married, what could his attentions to her daughter mean?—and how unkind, to say the least, was it in Lady Lucy Donellan, she thought, not to tell her that Lord N. was a married man! "Yet I must own," said she mentally, "Lady Lucy was not likely to suppose I could be so—so foolish as to expect a peer would marry my daughter!"

Thus humbled, offended, mortified, and self-condemned, she paused a moment longer at the table to recover herself; and then making her way up to her daughter, she put her arm in hers, and begged a gentleman whom she knew to call up her carriage. He did so, and Lord N. was reluctantly forced to follow with Jane. When she was in the carriage, Mrs. Derville told the gentleman who had called it up, that she could not go away without her son, and she begged him to go in search of him. He having met him in the hall, and brought him, much against his will, to the safe protection of his mother, they drove off; while with a heart at once agitated yet relieved, oppressed yet grateful, Mrs. Derville sat in perturbed silence by her equally silent children. Her night was nearly a sleepless one; but it was also one of wise decision, for she resolved to leave London the day after the next, especially as Lionel that night had asked her permission to go with Sir Mordaunt to some fashionable races, and to stay with him a night or two at his hunting-box in the neighbourhood; to which request she had given a decided negative, which her son had received with evident displeasure.

Mrs. Derville rose early, and immediately sent a note to Mr. Farrell, her solicitor, to beg to see him in his way to the city that morning; and he came before Jane and Lionel were down. Mrs. Derville immediately asked him whether he knew any thing of Sir Mordaunt Williams; and he gave her such an account of him as fully justified Sir Thomas Waring's fears for her son, and determined her to lose no time in removing him from so pernicious an associate.

She did not think it necessary to ask any questions relative to Lord N.; the fact spoke for itself;—Lord N. was a married man, and yet he had paid her daughter as marked attentions as if he had been at liberty to pay his serious addresses to her!

When Jane and Lionel made their appearance, the latter looked grave, and as if he had a request to urge but had not sufficient courage. Mrs. Derville guessed that it was a renewal of the petition to accompany Sir Mordaunt; and she resolved to put a stop to his hopes by telling him she had burnt the letter to his father, which she had written to ask leave to stay longer, and that she was positively determined to leave London *the next day*. "O, I am so glad, mamma!" exclaimed little Mary Ann, "so glad! Then I shall see dear papa again! and Nelly, and my rabbits!"

But Mary Ann was the only glad person present;—her brother and sister were distressed for themselves, and her mother for them. She feared that her daughter's affections were a little entangled by Lord N.'s assiduities, from her evident emotion; and she also feared that Sir Mordaunt had already inspired her son with a taste for fashionable life, which might unfit him for his studies at college.

But it was necessary for their good that she should let them know all she had learned, and from the best authority, relative to the attentive admirer of the one, and the flattering friend of the other. And while her maternal heart bled at the idea of the pain which she was going to inflict on those she loved, she could not help reproaching herself for having suffered her maternal ambition to urge her to tolerate an intimacy between her daughter and any man, of whom she knew nothing but his agreeable manners and high rank. But though she did not presume to blame Lady Lucy for not having told her that Lord N. was married, as that lady could not have foreseen how far her vanity as a mother would carry her ill-founded hopes; she did blame her for not having told her that Sir Mordaunt was a dangerous companion for her son.

"Yes, my sweet child," said Mrs. Derville, after a pause in answer to Mary Ann's exclamation; "yes, we shall see dear papa very soon now; and I fear, Mary Ann, that you are the only one of us that can look at him without some self-reproach, for you are the only one that has always been willing and anxious to return to him. I have been a truant to him, but I am so no longer; for I am sick of the depravity and hollowness of the children of this fashionable world, and I long to be restored to my own innocent home and your dear father."

"Sick of London! sick of this delightful place!" exclaimed both Lionel and Jane at once; "O dear mother! how can you talk so?—And when do you mean to go?"

"To-morrow."

"To-morrow? Oh, no! not *to-morrow*. Pray, dear mother, do stay till next week."

"Impossible."

"What will Lady Lucy say?" said Jane.

"And what will Lord N. say, Jane?" said Lionel, looking at his sister with a meaning smile.

"And what will your new friend Sir Mor-

daunt say, whom you make such a fuss about?" replied Jane, blushing as she spoke.

"Mary Ann, my dear," said Mrs. Derville, "go into the next room, shut yourself in, and try to compose a pretty letter to your dear papa to tell him we are coming, and how glad you are!" And Mary Ann, delighted at the commission, gladly obeyed, leaving her mother at liberty to make a communication which might have effects that she did not wish her to witness.

"What Sir Mordaunt may say, and what Lord N. and even Lady Lucy may say, is of no importance to us. The sooner you break off acquaintance with Sir Mordaunt the better for you, dear Lionel. And when I reflect on the marked attention Lord N. pays you, Jane, I am convinced that it is time you should separate."

Both the brother and sister faltered out, "What do you mean, dear mother?" and in such evident consternation, that Mrs. Derville's voice faltered as she replied, and told Lionel all she had heard, and *how* she had heard it, of his *friend* Sir Mordaunt. The young man listened, and fain would have disbelieved what he heard; but his memory furnished him with so many instances of lax morality in the conversation of his seducing companion, and of his love for play, that he was induced to own at last that the acquaintance so flattering to his vanity might have been fatal to his peace; and silently, but not *very* unwillingly, he promised to prepare for their departure to-morrow.

"But why," said he at length, seeing that Jane looked disturbed at what her mother had said of Lord N., "*why* do you disapprove Lord N.'s attentions to Jane, and take her away before she has completed her conquest, and the peer is her own?"

"Nonsense!" cried Jane, pleased though pouting as she said it.

"Nonsense *indeed*," replied Mrs. Derville, "as Lord N. is already a married man, though he is separated from his wife."

"A married man!" cried the indignant Lionel, starting from his seat, while Jane looked pale and motionless as a statue, "a married man! and pay such attention to my sister? Then he is a villain!—But it *can't be*, you must be misinformed."

"Impossible. My informant was a lady who saw Lady N. yesterday morning."—She then related word for word what she had overheard in the refreshment-room.

"Oh! what shall I do?" exclaimed Jane, in great emotion; "Lord N. is coming hither this morning. I can't see him, indeed I cannot—A married man, and be so very particular in his attention to me!" Here a burst of tears relieved her agitated spirits, which the soothing kindness of her mother and her brother soon quieted again; though Lionel, however, nearly overset her again, by declaring that if he saw Lord N. he must affront him. But as his mother *insisted* that he should leave the room as soon as ever he heard him announced, to avoid aught of unpleasant explanation, Jane became composed again; and at length Mrs. Derville succeeded in convincing her that she ought to see Lord N., and show him by the reserve of her manner, that if he flattered himself that his attentions had made an impression on her heart, his vanity had deceived him; but that, having considered him as a single man, she had not scrupled to admit of attentions which she should now think it unprincipled in her to receive. "I conclude, my child," she added, "that whatever impression his agreeable manners have made on you, that impression must have been instantly effaced by the conviction of his unworthiness;—and a married man who tries to win the affections of an innocent girl, *must* be a being wholly devoid of principle."

"True, very true,—still I had thought, I had hoped—"

"Yes," cried Lionel, "the idea of decking that beauteous brow with a coronet made thee forget much thou should'st have remembered, Jane. Naughty girl! to forget that if you wore a coronet, poor Eustace would wear the willow; ay, and that the willow perhaps would have waved over his early grave."

"Nonsense!" again exclaimed Jane, but in a different tone to that in which she spoke before; for the remembrance of true and virtuous love was sweet to her heart, even though it awakened a feeling of self-reproach, when she recollected how weakly that heart had beaten at hearing flatteries and professions which now she must learn to consider as the breathings of degrading admiration. Mrs. Derville had yet another piece of information to give—and that was the age of Lord N. And when her astonished auditors heard it, Lionel was so amused at the idea of his sister, a girl of eighteen, being doomed to pine in hopeless love for a youth upwards of fifty, that Jane could not help joining in the laugh; and she declared that were Lord N. to be able to offer her his hand she should positively reject it. Thus far all was well. And the mother's heart being lightened of its principal cares by the way in which her children had received what she had been forced to impart to them, she proceeded with cheerful alacrity to prepare every thing for her journey.

During the course of the morning Lord N. came, and Mrs. Derville was gratified to see with what propriety of feeling and manner Jane received him. Lord N. immediately saw that something had effected a change in the feelings both of the mother and the daughter towards him,—and he suspected the truth, as he had soon discovered that they were strangers to his real situation, which even those who knew of it frequently forgot, and he also saw that his attentions had awakened

ambitious hopes in the hearts of both; he therefore thought himself justified in trifling with the presumptuous hopes of these handsome nobodies, and he knew Lady Lucy Donellan's selfishness too well to fear that she would discover what he wished to conceal; for, so as she could but attract him to her house, he well knew she would not be delicate as to the means.

While he was thus revolving in his mind who could have told the *rural beauties*, as they were called, that he was a married man—and had convinced himself that they knew it—he resolved not only to make a virtue of necessity, and disclose himself what could be concealed no longer, but to mortify at the same time that pride which now was, on principle, offending his. "And so you are going away to-morrow?" said he in a tone of regret; "I am very sorry to hear it;—and the more so, as I have not been able hitherto to request the honour of seeing you and hearing you at my villa—charming rooms for music, I assure you; and I have a very fine instrument there. My wife, Lady N., is an excellent musician, and she chose it; and when we separated, I insisted on keeping it. You have heard, probably, of my unfortunate situation?"

Jane was too angry to answer; but Mrs. Derville replied, that she was aware now that he was married, and separated from his lady; but she had not heard of it till the night before; "and then," she added, "as your lordship's manners are entirely those of a *young* (laying an emphasis on that word) and *disengaged* man, I could not believe you were married, and had been so for near *thirty* years, without great difficulty."

He coloured violently at this implied sarcasm, and the more so as he thought he saw a sarcastic smile on the lip of Jane; and piqued in his turn, he observed that he was to be sure quite a boy when he married, and far too young to judge of any thing but external recommendations in the choice which he made;—that Lady N. was young, beautiful, and high born, for she was a duke's daughter; and as noble birth was a qualification absolutely necessary, in his opinion, in the woman whom he married, he was happy to find it united to beauty and accomplishments in the Duke of B.'s heiress; and that these requisites had so blinded him to the defects in Lady N.'s temper, that when they were married, his surprise equalled his misery.

Both the ladies *understood* the revenge intended in this speech, and wisely resolved to let it pass without an answer. Mrs. Derville therefore changed the subject; and saw, to her great satisfaction, that Jane bore her part as usual in the conversation. But Lord N. felt so provoked, and perhaps so disappointed, spite of his assumed composure, that as soon as Mr. Farrell was announced, he arose, and took his leave in a very hurried manner.

Mr. Farrell did not stay long; and he was scarcely gone, after having warmly approved of Mrs. Derville's projected departure, when a very different visiter arrived, and one who did not, like Mr. Farrell, approve their departure, but who came to prevent it if possible,—for Lady Lucy Donellan entered the room.

"Why, my dearest Mrs. Derville," she exclaimed, seizing her hand, "what is this that I hear? But I declare I could not believe it till I heard it from your own lips. I am told—but it is really incredible—that you are going to run away from us to-morrow morning;—and here have I been projecting such delightful plans for you all next week, and such a sweet little party at my own house to-morrow evening, made *on purpose* for you, and to present you to some charming persons of high rank, the cleverest creatures in the world, who are dying to make your acquaintance!"

"I am much indebted to you, Lady Lucy, for this further proof of your kind attention," replied Mrs. Derville, coolly; "but no consideration can induce me to prolong my stay here another week."

"Well, well, but do stay *over to-morrow*. I *assure* you, I can't do *without* you; and it is a party made on purpose for you and your sweet *warblers*. I have promised the company they should see and hear a nest of the most charming singing birds—such a lively and tuneful group!"

"It is *impossible*, madam; the singing birds must henceforth sing in their own *safe woods*, for here they find there are *hawks* only too ready to pounce on their unconscious heads."

"Hawks! hawks! Very pretty and metaphorical, but wholly incomprehensible, I protest! Hawks! I assure you all my guests to-morrow are more like turtle-doves, and prepared to coo out their admiration for the sweet warblers. I assure you there is a young and beautiful heiress who is coming, and who says such things of *you*, Mr. Derville, as I must not repeat, lest it should make you conceited;—and a certain young baronet declares Miss Derville is a divinity! And I really believe poor Lord N. will destroy himself when he comes and finds my house deprived of its attraction. What will he say or do when he finds that sweet syren gone?"

"Find some other sweet syren as soon as possible, if one there be so lost to propriety as to encourage the marked addresses of a *married man*. Had Miss Derville known Lord N. was married, she would not have so long encouraged attentions which, I am truly concerned to say, have already, I find, exposed both her and her mother to observations of an unpleasant nature."

"And is it possible, my dear creature, that you can be so weak as to mind what jealous envious women say? Lord N.'s attentions and admiration are quite enough to make any woman the fashion; and I am quite delighted

to see how charmed he was with your sweet Jane, as I knew how it would get her on in the world. And *now* that she is so admired, so sought after, and that I have no doubt of something very great turning up for her, it is quite a cruel, *marâtre* sort of step to take her away. Besides, to give you a little gentle caution; if, as you say, of which I had *no suspicion*, you did not know till now that Lord N. was married, your going off *immediately* on hearing it, will show everybody that this delightful Adonis of fifty-odd had gained your daughter's affections, and you thought it better to sound a retreat; besides at the same time telling the world that, considering your situation in life, you have rather *high* and ambitious views for your daughter."

At first Mrs. Derville was too much agitated to answer this long and artful address; while Jane sat in trembling silence, and Lionel looked at Lady Lucy as if he wished she were a man that he might knock her down.

"If, madam," at length replied Mrs. Derville, "my ambition ever betrayed me into wishing to see my child the wife of a nobleman, and that nobleman Lord N., I am quite willing to expose myself, as some expiation of my folly, to the mortifying suspicions and observations which you mention."

"But have you any right to expose your *daughter* to them? answer me that."

"*Jane*, do *you* answer, for I feel assured that you will answer as you ought." And Jane, scarcely able to refrain from tears, replied, "Whatever my mother thinks best to do both for me and for herself, I am convinced is the best thing to be done; and as she thinks it right to go away to-morrow, I am most willing to do so, let the world say what it pleases."

"Mighty obedient indeed! And you, Mr. Derville, are *you* equally willing and obedient as your meek sister? are *you* disposed to break your engagement with that elegant tonish young man, Sir Mordaunt Williams, who has paid *you* more attention than I ever saw him pay any man in my life, and who would have given the very last polish to your manners?"

"No doubt," replied Lionel with a sarcastic smile, and quite forced over to his mother's side by Lady Lucy's impertinence, as he called it; "no doubt, my manners might have received the last polish; but what does your ladyship think would have become of my *morals*, under such a tutor as we *now* find Sir Mordaunt is capable of being?"

"And pray what have you to say against Sir Mordaunt's morals? He is not worse than other young men, I dare say; and I cannot think what officious person has been interfering, to frighten you all away at a moment when your own interest so forcibly requires you to remain here."

"Accident, or I might say Providence, caused me to overhear last night what has produced this change in my plans; and when I have related what that was, Lady Lucy, you will not wonder at my decision." She *did* relate it;—and before Lady Lucy could reply, Mrs. Derville added, "you see, therefore, madam, that a *stranger* felt pity for that mother, for whom *you*, a professed friend, felt no pity at all. A stranger wished me to be put on my guard, while *you* carefully concealed my son's danger from me;—and all these circumstances considered, can you wonder that the singing-birds, as I said before, are resolved to warble no longer where they know that there are hawks ready to pounce on them?"

Lady Lucy was now convinced that the eyes of the anxious mother were too completely opened to be closed again; and since all her hopes were at an end of making the Dervilles of any further service to her, she had no longer any measures to keep with them. She therefore gave way to the natural violence of her temper and meanness of her disposition, and reproached Mrs. Derville, in words almost inarticulate from passion, with the extent of her obligations to her, and with the base ingratitude with which she had returned them; by indirectly accusing her of purposely exposing her daughter to the addresses of a married man, and her son to the corruptions of a profligate companion; but that she was glad she had discovered the *real* nature and character of Mrs. Derville, and had found out, that with much seeming morality and pretence to religion, she had, as was usually the case, a great deal of real rancour, and was very apt to listen to scandal against other people.

"Little did I think," added Lady Lucy, "that an acquaintance which I had been so charmed with was to end in this manner. However, since it *must* be so, I am glad it has terminated so soon, as I shall feel the less; since my *tender* nature is so apt to attach itself, that if a few days more of intimacy had taken place, it would have broken my heart to give you up, as I now do, *for ever*." So saying, she rushed to the door, and was down stairs before the Dervilles had recovered the consternation arising from so many varied feelings as her parting address had awakened in them.

Little Mary Ann, however, who had witnessed the whole scene, was fully mistress of herself; and jumping with joy she exclaimed, "I am glad she is gone! a spiteful old woman!" and then with great power of mimicry she took off Lady Lucy's manner and tones, and gave the greatest part of the concluding sentences with such admirable correctness, that both Lionel and Jane could not help laughing; though Mrs. Derville, who disliked and had forbidden the exercise of so vile a talent, would have chidden her severely, could she have attended to her sufficiently.

Lady Lucy, meanwhile, had scarcely gotten to the door, when she recollected how fool-

ishly she had acted in quarrelling with these rustics, as they lived near a fashionable watering-place, and it might be very convenient to her to go and spend a few weeks at their house every autumn. She therefore resolved to go back, entreat Mrs. Derville to pardon the irritability of her temper, and the exquisite acuteness of her feelings when the tenderness of her friendship was wounded, and so on; and she was entering the room with her handkerchief ready to put to her eyes to weep out her apology, when she heard and saw Mary Ann mimicking her to the very life; and unable to control her rage at this unexpected proof how cheaply she was held in the family, she gave the unconscious child a box on the ear, which certainly rivalled, if it did not exceed in force that given by Queen Elizabeth to Lord Essex; and having done this, Lady Lucy, ashamed of the exploit, and convinced this had not been the way to get an invitation to Lovelands, ran down stairs again as fast as possible and drove off, resolved to revenge herself on the *rustics*, as she now called them, instead of the *rural beauties* and *sweet singing-birds*, by declaring that Mrs. Derville had found out her daughter was desperately in love with Lord N., and had therefore taken her away for fear of consequences —a report which was too flattering to his vanity for Lord N. not to confirm as much as possible.

The Dervilles did not soon recover their surprise at this second visit from Lady Lucy, and her sudden disappearance after having given poor Mary Ann so painful a memorial of her presence;—she seemed, like a malignant fairy at a birth to which she had not been invited, to have come for the purpose of inflicting pain, and then to have vanished as soon as she had succeeded in her endeavour. But as soon as recollection was restored to them, Mrs. Derville coolly said to Mary Ann, "I am obliged to Lady Lucy for having saved me the pain of correcting an offending child myself; the severity of the blow which she has given you, Mary Ann, is sufficient punishment for your presumption in doing what you know I hate and disapprove, and I trust that the remembrance of this well-deserved chastisement will prevent your ever erring in this manner again."

"No, it would not," sobbed out Mary Ann; "for I would do it again *directly*, though she were to beat me black and blue, on purpose to tease her, but for fear of vexing you, mamma, —that I am sorry for indeed; but for nothing else."

Mrs. Derville on hearing this rose, and taking Mary Ann by the hand, led her into another room, as she never reproved either servant or child before another; and having reasoned with the refractory and impenitent offender, she brought her back again penitent and subdued.

This was the last event in their London life; and as it put a stop to their acquaintance with Lady Lucy Donellan, it was one that might be reckoned fortunate, if not important.

Mrs. Derville saw with a thankful heart the dawning of that day which was to see them on their road from London and its dangers, and light them on their return to the safety and comfort of their home; for the fears of her maternal heart had been so strongly excited, both for the peace of her daughter and the morals of her son, that as yet she was alive to nothing but the dangers of the metropolis, and particularly of the high circle in which she had moved; and its charms were for the time entirely forgotten. But no feeling less strong than that of maternal love could have had such an effect on Mrs. Derville, whose pride and vanity — of which, like all human beings, she had her share — had been gratified to the utmost during her stay in London; and the only thing wanting to her enjoyment was the presence of her husband; for she never returned from those scenes where she had really shone a rival to her daughter, and had been certainly more noticed, without saying to herself, "I wish Derville had been there to see how much I was admired!"

Still, however, in spite of the flatteries of London, when the boxes were cording, when every bill was paid, the carriage at the door, and the last adieus to her kind friend the solicitor were spoken,—Mrs. Derville's heart beat with a consciousness of certain relief, and she jumped into the carriage with a degree of alacrity in which she was rivalled by Mary Ann alone. For Miss Derville was not yet reconciled to the surrender of her dreams of offered, if not of *accepted* rank; and she was mortified, probably, that she had no conquests to relate on her return, in order to increase her value in the eyes of one, by whom, however, her value was already sufficiently appreciated. And Lionel was vexed at not being able to see the races of which he had heard so much; and as he had received from Sir Mordaunt a very kind note of regret in return to his of apology, he was much disposed to believe that report had done him injustice, and to wish his mother had not been so firm in her decision.

These reflections led them to proceed some miles on their journey before silence was at all broken, except by Mary Ann's exclamations of delight at seeing the country again, and having left that disagreeable London. But before they reached the place where they were to sleep, the buoyancy of youthful spirits had returned, and anticipations of home resumed their power over the minds of the young people.

With Mrs. Derville, however, the case was different. As she left London further and further behind her, with all its flatteries, its agreeable idleness, its gaieties, and those comforts, (as they were there called,) but

which Mrs. Derville felt to be luxuries,—she remembered with grateful regrets the pleasures London had afforded her, and the admirers, if not the friends, which she had left;—while the moral and other dangers which her children had escaped by leaving it, and the moral disgust which she herself had experienced, were forgotten in the pleasing remembrance of the happiness that she had enjoyed there.

True, she tenderly loved her husband, and was fondly anticipating the pleasure of being re-united to him;—but when the first delight of meeting should subside, she knew that those privations, the consequence of a narrow income, would appear to her more painful than ever, by the recently acquired ability to contrast her slender store of domestic accommodations with the luxuries which she had witnessed. — She was returning to small rooms, old furniture, and few, if any, of those bed-room or parlour comforts which our ancestors did very well without, but which we have learned to believe are absolute requisites. She was returning to the regular discharge of such domestic duties as a narrow income made necessary, and which, however disagreeable, she had hitherto cheerfully fulfilled. But life during the last five weeks had opened upon her in a new light; — the mornings had lately awakened her only to the pursuit of pleasure in the crowded street, public drive, or the fashionable promenade; while the tasteful morning dress was succeeded by the as tasteful evening one. She had learned to be dissatisfied with the simplicity of her own rural retirement by spending two nights at the villa of a woman of fashion; and she thought with pain of the resumption of household employments, from recollection of the pleasures of elegant idleness in the metropolis. "I wish some one would give Mr. Derville a living of a thousand a year!" was always the burthen of her song after these thoughts had got possession of her mind; and she *sometimes* was tempted to regret that the money which she had expended in London was the only sum which her husband intended should be taken from the legacy that she had just received, as the income of the property was only sufficient he thought,—and he valued it accordingly,—to enable him to give his son a college education; for the very considerable legacy which Lady Lucy used to talk of, in order to increase the rustics' weight in society, (as she now called them,) was not much more than four thousand pounds. "However," thought Mrs. Derville, "a small sum will do something towards improving the inside of the rectory at least, and I know Derville will not deny it to me."

These ideas had full possession of her mind when the mansion and grounds of Mrs. Arlington burst upon her view, and called forth the sigh of envy from her bosom. "Just such a place I should like to live in—of just such a place I might once have been mistress!" she had just said to herself, when she saw the door of the house open, and a servant in a very rich livery appear at it, accompanied by another person whom she concluded to be a gentleman out of livery, and whom, but for her residence in the *beau monde*, she would certainly have taken for a real gentleman. "I should not wonder," said Mrs. Derville, "if we were to meet Mrs. Arlington or some fine persons coming to her house, as the servants seem expecting some one." She had scarcely spoken, when two outriders in similar liveries appeared in sight, and not far behind them an open barouche drawn by four fine grey horses. In the landau was one lady, whose features were hidden by a veil, and on the barouche seat a female whom they took for her maid. But though the children made these observations, the postilions drove so rapidly that, though no coward, Mrs. Derville was too much taken up in watching the motions of her own driver to heed any thing else; and her fears proved only too well founded; for just at the narrowest part of the road, as Mrs. Derville's postilion tried in vain to get out of the way of the other carriage, the wheels became entangled; and as the latter carriage was forced along by the speed of the horses, it took off the wheel of Mrs. Derville's infirm vehicle (a landaulet lent her by a friend and neighbour for the journey.) In one instant therefore it was overturned; while Lionel was precipitated into the road, and lay there motionless and stunned with the fall.

Jane and Mary Ann were unhurt; but Mrs. Derville fell against a sharp stone which cut open her temple; but though the blood streamed down her cheek, she heeded it not, as terror for her son engrossed her every faculty; and throwing herself beside him, she gave way to every expression of anxious and suffering tenderness which her quick feelings dictated; while Jane, more mistress of herself, despatched the postilion on one of the horses to a farm-house for assistance; and the maid-servant held the other, anxiously looking after Mrs. Arlington's carriage as she did so; for a scream, which did more honour to her feeling than her self-command, had escaped that lady on seeing the accident, and Jenny thought it likely that she would send some assistance to them from her house. But she knew not Mrs. Arlington; it was her custom to give, not send assistance only; and as soon as her postilions could stop the horses, who had run away, Jenny to her great relief saw the carriage driving back, and the lady, who she fancied must be Mrs. Arlington, still in it. In one minute more that lady was by her side; and shortly after, while a tear filled her eye on seeing the senseless state of Lionel, and on hearing the touching lamentations of his mother, Mrs. Arlington was chafing Lionel's temples with *eau de Cologne*, and assisting Jane in examining the head.

But he was only stunned, not wounded, by the fall. In a short time he opened his eyes, and recollection entirely returning, he raised himself up from the ground without assistance. The transition from woe to joy was too much for his agitated mother; and to the terror of the surrounders she became insensible herself; for not till now had they observed the wound on her temple, and they feared that she had fainted from loss of blood. Mrs. Arlington's outriders and other servants had by this time arrived; and that lady insisted on conveying the whole party to her house, while she sent for the nearest assistance; and when Mrs. Derville recovered, she found herself going slowly along in Mrs. Arlington's barouche, with her head reclining on Jane's shoulder, her hand in that lady's, while Mary Ann, supported by her maid, sat in the barouche seat; and Lionel, holding her other hand, was watching with agitated expectation the moment of returning life.

"Oh! what is all this?" she faltered out at first, "and what does it mean?" But immediately, "I recollect it all now, and you are restored to me!" she exclaimed, bursting into a passionate flood of tears, and throwing herself on her son's neck.

The first feeling was for Lionel, the next for Mrs. Arlington, whose fine countenance expressed her sympathy with the scene before her, and to whose kindness Mrs. Derville saw that she was at that moment much indebted. But before Mrs. Derville could ask a single question, Mary Ann called out, "O, dear mamma, only think! we are going to that fine house!" and the carriage stopped at the door.

Mrs. Derville was beginning to express regret and other things usually said on such occasions, but she was stopped by Mrs. Arlington, who replied with a benevolent smile, that having done the mischief it was merely her duty to do all she could to repair it; but that in this instance she could assure Mrs. Derville it was her pleasure also; and as her landaulet was so broken that it could not be mended in a day or two at least, she must beg Mrs. Derville and her family to consider her house as their home till they were able to leave it.

"But can we not procure a post-chaise and go on directly?" said Mrs. Derville.

"A post-chaise can't conveniently hold five persons, though one of them is my little friend there," was the answer; "and if you are expected anywhere, the post goes out in a few hours, and you can write whatever you choose; besides, remember, you have gone through a great deal, and want rest."

Mrs. Derville bowed her acquiescence; nor did she do it reluctantly; she read the asking eyes of her children—powerful pleaders always at her maternal heart—and she was not sorry herself to be forced into an immediate renewal of the luxuries which she had reluctantly resigned.

The travellers alighted; and while the trunks were bringing from the broken vehicle, Mrs. Arlington begged leave to conduct them to her own apartments, which consisted of a suite of rooms on the ground-floor opening on the parterre that had so much excited their admiration; but the trunks arrived before they had sufficiently examined the beauties that surrounded them; and their kind hostess, having accompanied them as soon as they had taken some refreshments, to the rooms intended for their occupation, left them to change their dress. When the surgeon for whom Mrs. Arlington had sent arrived, he soon convinced Mrs. Derville that her son's fall would be attended by no serious consequences whatever; and he also made her children easy, by assuring them that a very slight application of lint would cure the wound on her temple. As Mrs. Arlington went down stairs, she met Mrs. Derville's servant going to her mistress, and she asked her the name of the lady whom she was so fortunate as to have for her guest; but the name was all of which the maid's reply informed her—and more she was too delicate to ask. All she knew, therefore, of her guests was, that her name was Derville; that the mother loved her children, and the children their mother, as mother and children should love each other; that they were uncommonly handsome; that their manners showed them to be well-bred, and they were probably well-born; nor was it possible for any woman whose morals were not correct, to have such a countenance and such ease of manner as Mrs. Derville had; and till she could learn more relative to them, Mrs. Arlington was satisfied with what she already knew.

Mrs. Derville, in the meanwhile, was equally easy with regard to the lady at whose house she had at present found an abode. She had convinced herself that Mrs. Arlington was a widow; and as every thing about her bore an air of uncommon opulence, she fancied that her new friend had been forced or induced to marry an old man for money, who had in return settled on her his immense possessions. She too was quite satisfied with the evidence of unimpeached respectability so strongly portrayed in the lovely and striking countenance and manner of Mrs. Arlington, who seemed a few years younger than herself; and she could not help being thankful for the accident which had led her to form an acquaintance which might some day or other be of service to her daughter.

While her mother was employed in writing to Mr. Derville, and telling him she only regretted the accident as it lengthened her separation from him, Mary Ann was in an ecstasy of delight; bounding from her mother's to her sister's apartment, now examining the pictures, now looking out of the windows on the lovely view before them, now flying with exultation to the window of the room in which she was

to sleep in the prettiest tent-bed in the world, at the open window of which peeped in branches of the sweetest and handsomest flowers which she had ever seen; for the magnolia in full blow was the one, and the double pomegranate in full bloom was the other. "O mamma, what a happy, enviable woman is Mrs. Arlington!" exclaimed the little girl for the twentieth time; and though she had neither husband nor child apparently, Mrs. Derville's newly-awakened taste for grandeur made her think so too. It was now long past Mary Ann's usual hour for dinner; and the poor child was delighted to think she was going to dine in company once more, a treat which she had rarely enjoyed in London; and the sight of her happy face was a real pleasure to the kind heart of Mrs. Arlington.

When the dinner-bell rung, the travellers obeyed the summons, and found a gentleman and a lady with their hostess. The gentleman was Mrs. Arlington's domestic chaplain; and in the lady Mrs. Derville recognised a Mrs. Hilmore, whom she had seen at Lady Lucy Donellan's, and who, hearing on her arrival that a Mrs. Derville and her family were guests at the Lawn-house, (so Mrs. Arlington's seat was called,) had made that lady acquainted with Mrs. Derville's whole history as she had heard it from Lady Lucy.—On Mrs. Derville's entrance, Mrs. Arlington smiling said, "I find that Mrs. Hilmore and you, Mrs. Derville, are old acquaintances?"

"By no means," replied the latter; "I have often seen but was never presented to Mrs. Hilmore." And that lady, looking rather foolish, made an ungracious curtsy, and led the way to the dinner-room. The truth was, Mrs. Hilmore's rank in life was not sufficiently decided to allow her to be gracious to those whom she thought her inferiors; and as she had not any particular point to carry, she saw no reason why she should make the acquaintance of a country clergyman's wife and daughter.

Mrs. Arlington, who knew this lady's character, only smiled as she witnessed her telltale hauteur, and resolved to be more marked than ever in her attention to Mrs. Derville; while she heartily rejoiced that as soon as dinner was over, Mrs. Hilmore was to set off on a visit to a distance, and had only called at Mrs. Arlington's in her way.

The dinner, which in all respects was worthy of the opulence and elegance of the owner, being at length over, the ladies returned to the drawing-room; and Mrs. Hilmore, unregretted by any one, departed. Mrs. Arlington then proposed a walk round the grounds, which proposal was gladly assented to. As the evening was sultry, she also proposed a row on the water, and the happy party found a boat and rowers ready at the word of command.

"There is every thing in this sweet place that the most ambitious person could desire," exclaimed Lionel.

"There is all one could possibly wish for, indeed!" said Jane.

"It is an enviable spot, to be sure!" observed Mrs. Derville.

Mrs. Arlington stooped down and gathered a water-lily at this moment, while Mary Ann said, "O mamma, I am so glad we were overturned! it was so lucky for us, as it brought us hither! I am so delighted with all I see!"

"For shame!" cried Jane; "how can you be glad of what made mamma go through so much misery, and put Lionel in such danger? See, mamma looks so pale, I am sure she has not recovered the fright yet."

"No, my child, I have not; but I am so sure that you and Lionel, as well as Mary Ann, enjoy the unexpected good luck of being Mrs. Arlington's guests, that I can forgive Mary Ann her little selfishness; though she well knows how often her dear father tells her that she is always to prefer, even in trifles, the good and pleasure of others to her own."

"How well and how forcibly is this important maxim illustrated," replied Mrs. Arlington, "in Miss Edgeworth's Tales! and as a compensation for the punishment which you have inflicted on this young offender, I will find a volume of the incomparable work to which I allude, and, with your leave, when we return to the house and candles are brought in, one of our young companions shall read it aloud to us while we work." Mary Ann,—whose head had dropped on her bosom, while a tear filled her eye at the rebuke from her sister and the accusation of selfishness from her mother,—revived at the idea of the promised treat, and became alive as before to the charms of every thing around her.

The amusement both on land and water being at an end, as the day was fast closing in, they returned to the house in a state of very enviable feelings; to which the only draw-back to the travellers was, that Mr. Derville was not a sharer in their pleasure. "This is a sort of pleasure that would have suited your father," said Mrs. Derville; "I never, for his own sake, wished for him at a London assembly."

"I often did," replied Lionel with feeling, "when I saw how much you and Jane were admired, and heard your singing praised; for I was myself so much gratified by the admiration which you excited, that I wished him to share in my pleasure."

Mrs. Derville's eyes filled with tears, and Jane's sparkled at this proof of affectionate feeling in one so dear to them; and Mrs. Arlington turned on him a look of approbation more expressive and more flattering than any words could have been. "And had *he* no admirers in London?" asked Mrs. Arlington,

smiling as she spoke; "he sings, does he not?"

"O dear, yes!" eagerly replied Jane, "quite as well if not better than we do; and I assure you *we* were very proud of *him*."

"I don't doubt it," answered Mrs. Arlington, fixing her large dark eyes with an expression of benevolent pleasure on the face of the happy mother before her; "and sweet is it to witness family affection like yours; but you must allow me to judge for myself of your vocal powers; therefore, as soon as you have read one of the tales of which we talked, we will adjourn to the music-room."

The tale was read and admired, the writer extolled and envied, whose wisdom was so eminently gifted with the power of making others wise in trifles as well as in great things; or rather, of convincing all who are capable of being convinced, that nothing is a trifle which involves the every-day comfort of a fellow-creature even in the minutest point whatever.

The party then adjourned to the music-room according to Mrs. Arlington's proposal, and Mary Ann was allowed to sit up till ten. The travellers sung most of the trios and duos which they had sung together in London; and while she heard the sweetness of their voices, the perfect tune in which they sung, gazed at the same time on their great beauty, and beheld the unpretending simplicity of their manner, she was not surprised that Lady Lucy Donellan had exhibited them with pride in her fashionable menagerie of human and two-legged animals.

But Mrs. Arlington feared that this taste of the fine world and of its flatteries would make the every-day employments of retired life comparatively insipid to them; and she was more disposed to pity them for the success which they had met with in the circles of fashion, than to congratulate them on it. "Does Mr. Derville love music?" said she.

"He *delights* in it," was the answer.

"I rejoice to hear it," replied Mrs. Arlington sighing. "That wife is enviable indeed, whose husband takes a pleasure in her accomplishments." And she secretly hoped that Mr. Derville's praises, to a heart as affectionate as Mrs. Derville's seemed to be, might still be sufficient to compensate for the flatteries of the titled and the fashionable.

Her guests were now solicitous to have the pleasure of hearing her, as they concluded from the instruments and music books, (which were considerable in number,) that Mrs. Arlington herself was a performer; but she refused to comply with their request, lest she should put an end to the ease and unembarrassment with which they now sung before her, and that she should therefore lose the pleasure which their singing gave her; as she could not but know that if they heard her perform they would be conscious that they were listening to a very finished singer. Therefore, as she saw their vanity had been much elated by their *petits succes dans le beau monde*, she was too benevolent to wish to mortify it, unless consideration for their good imperiously demanded it;—but she played waltzes and a sonata to them, and they found that she was a first-rate player. The hour of rest was now arrived; and after the family had been summoned to prayers, the party separated, pleased with each other, and anticipating with satisfaction the return of morning.

Morning came, and the breakfast room and the breakfast-table exhibited so many beauties, so many luxuries, and so many conveniences, that poor Mrs. Derville found the Lawn-house more calculated to put her out of conceit with her humble home than any thing which she had seen during her London visit; and Mrs. Arlington's penetration was not slow to discover the frame of mind which the sight of her elegant and complete establishment excited in her guest. "How necessary it is," thought Mrs. Arlington, "for most persons to avoid temptation, for there only the safety of most of us lies!—how few are proof against its seductions! Here is this happy wife and mother become, I see, discontented with her blissful and enviable lot, because she has witnessed a style of living superior to her own,—and which is unable to confer happiness; whereas, if she had stayed at home in her peaceful and privileged retirement, she would have remained happy in the possession which she has, and not have incurred the *vice*, as I may call it, of murmuring at her lot!"

Mrs. Arlington broke from this moralizing reverie just time enough to hear Mrs. Derville say, "I shall really insist on your father's laying out a little money on some furniture and conveniences like these for the table, and so on;—we really have nothing to use but what looks now as if it came out of the ark—and we have no new inventions whatever;"—while Jane and Lionel assented to the absolute necessity of such purchases; and in a short time there was nothing in the room in which they were, which was not to be copied in miniature at Lovelands.

Mrs. Arlington said nothing; but she sighed as she discovered that she was an object of envy to one, whose peculiarly happy fate excited her envy; and when during the course of that day she observed Mrs. Derville's increased disposition to speak even with petulant dissatisfaction of the paucity of comforts which her home afforded, and to dwell on her resolution to make Mr. Derville do this and buy that,—as if the consciousness that the money came from her made her more resolved to be peremptory in her demands,—Mrs. Arlington wished, if possible, to cure the growing evil before it was too late, and to administer the remedy, however painful it might be to her to apply it; for, spite of the little weaknesses which this London journey had called forth so perceptibly

in Mrs. Derville and her elder children, she could not help feeling a generous interest in their fate, and a conviction that they had excellent hearts and good principles; and she was the more convinced of this, when she drew from Mrs. Derville, when alone with her, the reasons of her sudden resolution to leave London, and of her power, while fortified by maternal affection alarmed for the safety of its objects, to resist the dangerous pleadings of Lady Lucy Donellan.

"This woman's happiness is worth preserving entire," thought she; "and I wish I could save her from the hazard of embittering her own peace, and alienating her husband's affections, by petty cavillings and complaints at the meanness and scarcity of such accommodations as, till now, domestic comforts and connubial happiness had prevented her from feeling." Again Mrs. Arlington sunk into a reverie; but as she was alone with Mrs. Derville, politeness compelled her to subdue her inclination to indulge in it; and, after complimenting Mrs. Derville very sincerely on her well-principled resolution, general subjects were started, and the arrival of company gave a new turn to their thoughts.

The next day, when the carriage was to have been mended and sent to the Lawn-house, it was not finished, and could not be ready, the workmen sent word, till the next evening, if then. And Mrs. Derville was again forced to tell Mr. Derville not to expect her; but she assured him that she would set off "the day after the next;" while she *endeavoured* to make herself believe that she was *very sorry* at the delay. When the letter was gone, Mrs. Arlington said that she hoped Mrs. Derville had not fixed any positive time for her return, as she wished to take advantage of the opportunity which chance had given her of making new friends, whom both her taste and her judgment approved; and that she had also the temptation to hold out to them of a musical party, which she was to have in two or three days. Mrs. Derville had not resolution to own that she had fixed a time for her return, as she wished to stay to this party; yet felt, that as her husband would expect her, she ought to go, and that Mrs. Arlington might think so too; she therefore evaded answering by a "You are very good—very flattering—should like to stay, but ashamed to intrude," and so forth. She then went to tell Jane and Lionel what Mrs. Arlington had said; and they, delighted at the idea of a party, and pleased to show off once more as they had done in London, proposed immediately that they should go and practise against the evening came.—That day was passed as much to their satisfaction as the two preceding ones, and company was invited to dinner; two of the invited guests were a gentleman of large fortune and his sister; and Jane, whose little heart had learned to beat with the love and hope of conquest, took care to dress her hair in the mode which Lord N. used to admire; and Lionel asked, as he adjusted his neckcloth at the glass, whether the sister was pretty as well as rich.

"I am glad," said Mrs. Arlington, "that you did not ask whether she was rich as well as pretty. If you had, I should have thought that you had not associated with Sir Mordaunt Williams with impunity, as *he* would so have worded *his* question."

"Do you know Sir Mordaunt?" replied Lionel, blushing.

"I know him well, and I also know Lord N.; and I assure you and Miss Derville, that your dear mother never deserved your love and gratitude more than when she resisted the pleadings of my old acquaintance, Lady Lucy Donellan, and took you from London."

Both the brother and the sister looked abashed at these words, and wished their mother had not been so communicative; still, there was something in Mrs. Arlington's manner which so strongly invited confidence, that they felt they should themselves have found it difficult to have concealed from her any thing which she wished to know.

The dinner party passed off pleasantly; though Jane was disappointed of the admiration which she expected; as Colonel Orme, a fashionable man, paid more attention to the handsome mother than the handsome daughter, and on Miss Orme, Lionel's well-tied neckcloth and his handsome person were wholly thrown away, as she was a complete votary of rank and fashion; and a Mr. Derville, a person whom she had never heard of before, could not possibly engage her attention. The case would have been different had Lionel boasted of his intimacy with Sir Mordaunt Williams, Lord N., and so on; for then she would have talked to him with delighted volubility of such "exquisite loves," and have even thought a Mr. Derville, "must be somebody, and something charming, to be known by such men;" but the Ormes had left London before the Dervilles arrived there. An opportunity of exhibiting this trait in her character was afforded Miss Orme at the close of the evening. Mrs. Arlington, though she declined singing herself, pressed her willing guests to perform; and on Jane's being requested to sing a duet with her brother, Lionel said, "Let us sing that duet which Lord N. was so fond of."

These words operated like an electric stroke on Miss Orme; and turning quickly round she said to Lionel, "Dear me! do you know Lord N.?"

"Yes, ma'am," was the laconic reply; for Lionel could not say, "I have that honour."

"Oh! do pray sing his favourite, it must be charming. Is not he quite a *love?*"

Before Lionel could answer so strange a question, Mrs. Arlington replied for him,

"Quite a love!—It is a very old love then, and he must be the grandfather of the loves."

"I know you never liked him," returned Miss Orme; "but I dare say this gentleman does, and those ladies."

Again Mrs. Arlington interfered to the great relief of her guests; "Very likely, for they only knew Lord N. by his reputation for great abilities and his insinuating manners; but you and I, Eliza, know more of him, you know. Yes," she continued; "they know Lord N., and they also know Sir Mordaunt Williams, and other of your *worthies*, and they met them at the house of Lady Lucy Donellan."

"Of Lady Lucy? O dear! now tell me, is she not delightful?" exclaimed Miss Orme.

"Is she not quite a *love*, or the grandmother of the loves?" rejoined Mrs. Arlington laughing.—"But a truce with these rapturous questions, and let us hear Lord N.'s favourite duet."

It was sung, and Miss Orme was in raptures with it; but she took care to add, lest she should be too gracious, that she should like to hear Miss Stephens and Braham sing it, or Mrs. Salmon and Vaughan, and then it would be perfect.

"I am by no means sure, Sophia, that you would know they were singing it, unless you were told so," said her brother, ashamed of her rudeness; "as you know you have no ear whatever; but I am sure that you never heard this duet so well sung by amateurs before. But now I hope, Mrs. Arlington, we may hear you?"

"No, excuse me," she replied; "my nerves are not strong enough this evening to allow me to sing before Miss Orme; for I should fancy she was thinking how Mrs. Salmon would have sung the song, and I must shrink from such a comparison."

Miss Orme, darting an angry glance at her brother and Mrs. Arlington, was beginning to defend her calumniated ear when their carriage was announced; and after a hurried and ungracious adieu from Miss Orme, and the last fashionable bow in perfection from the Colonel, the visiters departed; and a feeling of relief seemed to extend itself through the whole party; though Mrs. Arlington was too benevolent to declare that she rejoiced in their departure, and her guests were too conscious of propriety to say it.

The next day one of her servants came to inform Mrs. Derville that her carriage was mended, and begged to know at what time the next morning she would want post-horses. This intelligence threw a visible gloom over the faces of the travellers; and Mrs. Arlington eagerly expressed her hope that Mrs. Derville had made up her mind to stay over the next evening, and to her musical party.

Mrs. Derville hesitated. Again her children looked at her with asking eyes. "It really is so tempting an invitation; it will be so long before we hear music again," broke from her unreluctant lips; while perhaps in her heart the temptation lay in the opportunity of making, not of hearing music, and of gratifying her own and her children's newly-acquired love of display.

"I would not press you to do what is unpleasant to you," said her kind hostess; "but I shall be sorry to part with you whenever you go; and I think I have such an entertainment to offer you to-morrow, that for your sake and my own I wish to detain you; and as you did not, I understand, tell Mr. Derville to expect you with certainty at any particular time, I feel justified in urging you to stay longer."

Mrs. Derville blushed, and avoided Mrs. Arlington's penetrating glance; for she knew that she had assured Mr. Derville that she should be at home at a particular time; but as Mrs. Arlington did not know that she had done so, and she was desirous to stay, she resolved to write to Mr. Derville by that day's post, and to oblige herself, her children, and her hostess. She therefore told the servant she should not want the horses till the day after the next; and the pleasures and agreeable occupations of the morning were resumed with fresh alacrity by the gratified Jane and Lionel, though their mother's enjoyment was clouded over by a feeling of self-blame which she could not conquer.

Mary Ann, except on the first day, had always dined by herself at an early hour, but she regularly came in at the dessert. This day, however, she would not stay away till the dishes were set on the table; but she made her appearance before her maid thought it was proper for her to go down; and then instead of stationing herself at Mrs. Arlington's elbow, she hung about her mother's chair in evident discomposure.

"What is the matter, my dear child?" said Mrs. Derville; "what has happened to vex you?"

"O mamma! Jenny says we are not going away to-morrow."

"Well, my dear, and what then? Are you not very happy here?" replied Mrs. Derville, with a heightened colour.

"O, yes—but—but—I want so much to see dear papa!"

"Come hither to me, my sweet child," said Mrs. Arlington kindly; and the child obeyed the summons. "And so you had rather go home to dear papa than stay with me and go on the water and gather flowers, and play on the lawn?"

"I can gather flowers and play about at home; and there I have Nelly, and my rabbits, and papa too!"

"Though last, not least, I trust," said Mrs. Arlington, smiling; "but, my dear, I am going to have company to-morrow, and fine mu-

sic; and mamma and your brother and sister wish to stay and hear it, and I wish they should."

"But I shall be in bed, and shall not hear it; and papa will be so disappointed! for he expects us, you know."

"No, I know the contrary; mamma did not tell him to expect you."

"Indeed, but she did though;" eagerly replied the little girl; "for I saw the letter.—Did you not, mamma?"

"Yes, I did," answered Mrs. Derville, in great confusion; "but I am going to write this evening to say that we shall not arrive till the day after I first mentioned."

An immediate and almost an appalling change took place in the fine countenance of Mrs. Arlington; and after a pause she said, "Then Mr. Derville is expecting you at a fixed time, is he? Poor man! Had I known that, I certainly should not have urged you to stay here."

She said no more. But in spite of her habitual courtesy it was evident to her guests that she was considerably disconcerted, and that while she fondly caressed Mary Ann, her eyes avoided theirs. The ice, the fruit, the cakes, and some sweet wine, soon banished from Mary Ann's mind, for the present, the sense of her disappointment, and the child became the only talkative person of the party.

"I do not think," she observed to Mrs. Arlington, "that you have any dog as handsome as mine. I wonder whether she will know me! I dare say the rabbits will not."

"If they do not, they will be very glad to see you, however, if you give them cabbage leaves," replied Mrs. Arlington; "and there is one person who will certainly know you—and that is dear papa."

"O yes, that he will;—though mamma says I am much grown."

"But not altered," answered Mrs. Arlington; "a London journey has made no change in you."

A sigh from Mrs. Derville showed that she took this observation to herself; and as her heart told her that it applied in a degree, she felt something like resentment against the observer.

Mrs. Arlington rose soon after, and the ladies adjourned to the drawing-room; and for the first time they found it difficult to find conversation. Lionel too for the first time felt reluctant to join them there.

He saw the effect which Mary Ann's artless communications had had on Mrs. Arlington; and he was nearly equally averse to blame his beloved mother, and his, till now, most kind and smiling hostess.

He conquered his feelings, however, and joined the party, to resume his delightful task of reading aloud one of Miss Edgeworth's tales, while the ladies worked; and while listening to moral truths told in the most impressive manner, Mrs. Arlington's ruffled brow became a little smoothed.

But it was only a little. She had an exquisite sense of moral beauty; and it was the apparent attachment of Mrs. Derville to her husband and her children which had interested her so strongly in her favour, and added power to the loveliness of her person, and the graceful simplicity of her manners.

It was the happy wife, conscious of her own happiness, and loving exclusively the cause of it, who had endeared herself to Mrs. Arlington; and now that she found the allurements of amusement, and the temptations perhaps of vanity, could lead this enviable wife to disappoint her expecting husband, and even cheerfully to consent to prolong an already long separation from him, that moral sense was so painfully wounded, and Mrs. Derville became so lowered in her opinion, that even if she had desired to do so, she could not have concealed her disappointment. Besides, though she acquitted Mrs. Derville of lying, she did not of disingenuousness. She had taken it for granted, untold, that Mrs. Derville did not tell her husband to expect her on a particular day; but then, though Mrs. Derville saw she was in an error, she did not rectify her mistake; and wherefore did she not? From a consciousness that she was not acting quite right towards this admirable husband.

After tea, as usual, they adjourned to the music-room, and the travellers endeavoured to sing—but their spirits were depressed; and though they sung, it was evident that they had rather not. They now again asked Mrs. Arlington, who had played to them both on the harp and piano-forte in a very masterly style, to favour them with a song also; but this, for reasons stated above, she had hitherto declined; and her guests imagined that she did so because conscious that her talent for singing was considerably inferior to her talent for playing.

But now, so far from wishing to spare them any feeling of alarm or mortification for their sakes, she wished rather to inflict it; and at least to convince them that this party, for which they had been so willing to defer the pleasure of returning home, and to disappoint the heart that loved them, was one in which their talents would not be wanted, and that they would have been more glad to listen at it, than to perform. Accordingly she sat down to the piano-forte, and sung one of the finest and most difficult songs of Mozart in the style of a professor, while her voice, at once rich in tone and of great compass, appeared to them the finest they had ever heard; and they looked at each other with wonder not unmixed with consternation; nor, when she had done, could they find words to thank her. She next sung at their request one of Handel's songs, and in a style of equal though different excellence. Again they pressed her,

and she sung a cavatina of Paesiello's, which she accompanied on the harp. A simple ballad succeeded, of which the words and air were her own composition;—the words were as follows:—

SONG.

To love thee was the easiest task
Affection ever taught me;
But now I 'm forced with smiles to mask
The woe that task has wrought me.

I saw thee fond, and thought thee true,
And swiftly flew my hours;
But oh! I wove a wreath of rue,
Which I mistook for flowers.

Then go! deceiver, haste away!
To me be lost for ever,
Since I am doomed to hail the day
That shall our fortunes sever.

Yes, go! nor let me see again
That smile—love's treacherous token;
Lest I once more resume my chain,
And this poor heart be broken.

"How could you, my dear madam," said Mrs. Derville at last, "allow us to expose ourselves before you as we have done?"

"If I had thought that you exposed yourselves, I would not have suffered you to do it, as I have no pleasure in seeing persons degrade themselves. You have sweet voices, good expressions; you sing in perfect tune, and I had great pleasure in hearing you; nor can I doubt that if you had had such instructions as I have been able to procure, you would have sung as well as I do."

"But why have you deprived us so long of the pleasure and improvement of hearing you?"

"Oh! I had my private reasons; and now, if you please, you must sing to me."

"Oh no—not after you—we can never now sing before you again."

"There, now you see the reason why I did not sing before. I knew that a mixture of vanity and humility would deprive me of the satisfaction of hearing you, and therefore I would not sing. But come, let us finish with the last chorus in *La Clemenza di Tito*, and I will take the sola parts. I will not ask Lionel to sing 'Ah! perdonna!' with me, for I know he would be too much alarmed to do it; but he shall hear me sing it with a first-rate gentleman singer to-morrow, and I expect some fine professional singers also."

The perturbed amateurs blundered through the chorus; and, no longer anticipating the musical party with very vehement satisfaction, as soon as prayers were over, they wished their hostess good night, and retired to their rooms.

When there, the complicated feelings of Mrs. Derville vented themselves in tears. She had lowered herself in Mrs. Arlington's esteem, and perhaps in her own—and she had probably wounded the heart of her husband—and all for what? For an amusement which probably would be productive both to her and her children of more pain than pleasure. True she should delight to hear such fine singing and such fine music, and to see Mrs. Arlington's splendid rooms lighted up and filled with company; but the dread of being asked to perform herself would damp her enjoyment the whole evening, and it would be nearly as painful to her to refuse the request of Mrs. Arlington as to comply. And had she been true to the whispers of affection—true to the just claims of her husband; instead of undergoing this weak but real distress, she would have been at that moment within less than half a day's journey of home, and the husband whom, spite of her inconsistency of conduct, she loved with the tenderest affection.

Many, bitter—but salutary—were the tears which Mrs. Derville shed that night, and the prayers of a thankful, were mixed with those of a contrite, spirit.

The next morning she arose very early, and went into the apartments of both her son and daughter before they were up; and after she had unburthened her mind to them, she went down to breakfast, and met Mrs. Arlington's altered eye—for, spite of herself, altered it was,—with a firm and cheerful glance.

Breakfast had not long been begun, when one of the servants came in and told Mrs. Derville that the horses would be at the door in two hours.

"Horses! what does this mean?" cried Mrs. Arlington.

"That we are going to-day," calmly replied Mrs. Derville. "Nay, my dear madam," continued she, seeing Mrs. Arlington was going to speak, "I am sure, though you are surprised, you are pleased, for I know you think it my duty to go."

"I do," frankly replied Mrs. Arlington; "and I *am* pleased, though selfishly I hate to part with you; but when I think of what a being you are returning to—a loved and loving husband—and the safe happiness of a wedded and retired home, then I can only envy you your privileged lot, and bid God speed you on your way."

As she said this, Mrs. Arlington affectionately grasped Mrs. Derville's hand, while every trace of coldness had vanished from her eye and from her manner, and then turning to the window she burst into tears.

Having soon re-seated herself, she said smilingly through her tears, "I trust this is not our last breakfast together."

"I hope not—earnestly hope not," said Mrs. Derville with great emotion; and Jane, who sat next to Mrs. Arlington, echoed her mother's words, and leaned her head fondly on her shoulder.

"Perhaps you will come and see us one day?" said Lionel; "only we have nothing to tempt you."

"Do you reckon yourselves as nothing; and the sight of that rare thing domestic happiness?"

"Do pray come?" said Mary Ann, hanging round her neck; "and I will give you Nelly, if you wish it. But no; she would not like that perhaps; so I will bring up one of her puppies for you."

"Thank you, dear child. So Nelly, whom I always concluded to be your nurse, turns out to be only a favourite bitch. But pray, how came she to be called Nelly?"

"You will be shocked to hear," replied Mrs. Derville, "that Nelly is the abbreviation of the high and most respected name of *Cornelia*, —Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, a great favourite with my children."

"Alas!—poor Cornelia!—Little, indeed, could I have expected to find aught of a Roman matron in Nelly, a pet dog. It reminds me of what Pope says in his Epistle on Medals, on Rome—

'And all her triumphs sink into a coin.'

But come, Mrs. Derville, while these young persons are preparing for their departure, let us have a *tête-à-tête* stroll together over the grounds." And taking her arm, Mrs. Arlington led Mrs. Derville to a favourite walk along the banks of the river. They were soon engrossed in very interesting conversation; for Mrs. Arlington, from some view of her own, wished to learn the future destination of Lionel; and as openness on one subject leads to similar openness on another, Mrs. Derville had told her questioner that Jane had a lover, a young clergyman with a good living in prospect; but she added that she must confess Jane had been so much admired in London, that she wished her not to be in a hurry to form so very moderate a marriage for a young woman of her person and connexions.

"Is her lover well principled, well educated, amiable, and fine tempered?" asked Mrs. Arlington eagerly.

"O yes! and very good looking too, and very clever."

"And are you sure he loves your daughter with a *real* passion?"

"O yes! and he has loved her from childhood."

"My dear Mrs. Derville," said Mrs. Arlington with almost solemn earnestness, "then let me conjure you not to be so fatally blind to your daughter's true welfare and happiness, as to wish for a moment to retard a union like this, when the lover is old enough to take the living designed for him, from the hope of her forming a higher connexion. Are you not happy in *your* station? and have you ever repented that in the pride of your youth and your beauty, and of your fortune too, you preferred Mr. Derville to his opulent rival?"

"*Never;* for my lot has been blessed beyond that of women in general."

"And why may not your daughter's be so too? Why show—where your child is concerned—the weak ambition which in your own case you so properly scorned? Oh! I have this subject much at heart. But I see that in your thick dress the heat of the day oppresses you; let us get into the boat, and then we can pass ourselves over to that shady seat on the opposite bank: for unfortunately there is not one of the servants or gardeners within call, or even in sight, an unusual circumstance."

"Let me take the oars then," said Mrs. Derville, jumping into the boat; "as I dare say I am more used to row than you." And as she spoke Mrs. Arlington prepared to follow her; but before Mrs. Derville's hand reached hers, to assist her into the boat, Mrs. Arlington's foot slipped, and she fell headlong into the river—and at the deepest part. For an instant, terror nearly deprived Mrs. Derville of recollection; but when she saw Mrs. Arlington rise again, her presence of mind returned, and she conjured her not to attempt to get into the boat, but desired her to cling to its stern; then recollecting that she had observed the water was shallow where she had stopped to examine an aquatic plant, she made for this place as fast as her strength would allow, still urging Mrs. Arlington, whom fear had nearly deprived of her senses, to keep her hold. It was a time of terrible suspense to Mrs. Derville, till she saw by the well-remembered flowers that she was drawing near the shallow water; but before she could reach it, Mrs. Arlington loosed her hold, and sunk again. By this time, however, Mrs. Derville had reached the place of comparative safety; and having jumped out of the boat on the bank, she waded into the river, seized the insensible Mrs. Arlington by her long hair, which now floated on the stream, and, certainly at some risk to herself, dragged her to the sloping bank, where half her person lay out of the water; but to extricate her friend entirely was beyond her power, nor dared she leave her an instant lest she should fall into the river again. She could therefore do nothing but scream violently for assistance; and in a few moments Lionel, who was on his way in search of them, appeared in sight, and hastened to her assistance, while servants soon after came running in all directions; but were at first too terrified and too wretched to be able to act at sight of their lady lying apparently dead on the grass, where Lionel had placed her. But on Mrs. Derville's assurance that there had not been time for the water which she had swallowed to have proved fatal, and that she had probably only fainted from exhaustion and alarm, they assisted in bearing her to the house; where in a few minutes the usual remedies restored her. Her first inquiry was for Mrs. Derville, into whose arms she threw herself, with a look more eloquent than words, and sobbed for some moments, with grateful tenderness, on her bosom.

"This lady's presence of mind and exertions saved my life," said she to those around her;

"but for her I should never have opened my eyes again."

Lionel and Jane felt and looked delighted at hearing this; and Mrs. Derville, who would have spoken, was choked into silence by the various "God bless you ma'ams," which met her ears on every side—some murmured out, some sobbed out, and some audibly pronounced, from the anxious and grateful domestics; who now, however, as well as Mrs. Derville, insisted on Mrs. Arlington's sending for advice, and going instantly into a warm bed, a precaution which Mrs. Derville herself also consented to do, as she too was wet through, and was now beginning to shake in every limb, from strong emotion, and the painful chilliness which it induces.

But though *she* patiently submitted to be undressed and to go to bed, and take some hot wine and spices, Mrs. Derville could not attempt to sleep, or even to lie quiet; and after she had returned thanks, heartfelt thanks, for having been made the instrument of saving a fellow-creature's life—and such a being too—she insisted on seeing Lionel and Jane; having resolved to persist in going away as soon after the appointed hour as circumstances would permit, unless Mrs. Arlington should be seriously ill in consequence of her accident; and after lying an hour she arose, being more refreshed by the information that Mrs. Arlington was declared by the surgeon, who had just left her, to be no sufferer in any way from what had passed—than by any cordial which could have been administered to her.

And it was fortunate indeed for her that both her friend and herself were so well; for the letters were now brought in; as, had it not been so, their contents would have been even more distressing than she now found them.

One was from Mr. Derville, and one from a friend of his. She read her husband's first. It was short, but very affectionate; and expressed his willingness to bear her prolonged absence as long as she felt happy to remain where she was; and she almost wished she had not ordered the horses. But when she read the letter of his friend, her agitation and her tears were so great as to alarm her children; and having just been informed that Mrs. Arlington wished to see her, she went to her bedside, gave her the letter, and ran out of the room.

Derville, on a principle of generous and considerate affection, had not told his wife of the fever in the village, even after it had entirely subsided; as he thought that if it did not hasten her home, it might still cloud over her pleasure with some fond though ill-founded fears for him; therefore, though he really wanted a little nursing after the fatigues which he had undergone, he resolved to say nothing to abridge his beloved wife and children of the term of their promised enjoyment.

But his friend and neighbour, Mr. Travers, who saw he looked ill, was not so forbearing; and he not only in his letter wished Mrs. Derville to return as soon as she could, but, giving way to his feelings of admiration for her exemplary husband, he told her the reason why he had urged her sudden departure with all her children for the metropolis; why he had urged her to prolong her stay there; and expatiated largely on the admirable and efficacious manner in which, while she was enjoying the pleasures of a town life, he was performing to the utmost the duties of a Christinn minister to his sick and suffering parishioners.

As Mrs. Arlington finished this letter, (which she read in broken accents to the weeping Jane, while Lionel, choked with emotion which the pride of manhood made him desirous to conceal, had been listening to his agitated mother's account of the same intelligence,) Mrs. Derville re-entered the room; and seeing Mrs. Arlington was greatly affected, she exclaimed in an agony of tears, "Only think! I might have lost him! If he had caught the infection, he might—" Tears choked her utterance. "But he did not catch it, and he has been spared in mercy for the good of others. Admirable, disinterested man!"

"I would go," added Mrs. Arlington, forcing a smile, "barefooted on a pilgrimage to Lovelands, only to look at him!"

"And I—*I* did not make it my first pleasure to return to him! But thank Heaven I had fixed to go before this letter came!"

Mrs. Arlington pressed her hand tenderly, and said, "I congratulate you on having done so."

"But surely," resumed Mrs. Derville, "you must think it was not right in him to keep me in such entire ignorance of what was going on? He might have given me my choice of going or staying."

"No, he has acted in the best possible manner; and you are, I tell you, the most enviable of women! Utter not a word against my hero, another good bishop of Marseilles, as he appears to me.—But are you ready to go? For, though I shall miss you greatly, I am now quite anxious for your departure."

They instantly left the room to prepare for the arrival of the carriage; and Mrs. Arlington rose in order to write a letter to Mr. Derville, exhorting him, if change of air was recommended to him, to come to the Lawn-house, and give her the pleasure of knowing a man who more than realized her ideas of what a husband, a father, and a Christian teacher should be. She then, with all the simple and short pathos of true feeling, gave him an account of her obligations to his wife, whom she justly called her preserver, and who was consequently entitled to eternal gratitude.

The carriage came to the door at last, though

now not fast enough for the impatience of Mrs. Derville. But to what a revolution of feeling, and what new emotions and sentiments had the changes of a few hours now given birth! Before, the obligation was all on Mrs. Derville's side; now, Mrs. Arlington was the obliged person, and had received from her a service to which most others are weak.

"I am not a woman of many words," said Mrs. Arlington in faltering accents; "but I will prove my gratitude to you by my actions. I will do for you what I would on no consideration do for any one else—in time I will explain myself."

Mrs. Derville's heart was too full to speak; and the new friends parted in silence and in tears; but Jane returned to repeat, for the tenth time, their united entreaties that Mrs. Arlington would write every day to say how she was.

How much easier is it to act well in difficult and strongly exciting circumstances, than to fulfil correctly the quiet and nameless duties of every-day life! No consideration could have induced Mrs. Derville to have left the side of her husband during his perilous visits to the chambers of disease and death; and had she heard of his dangers, while in the midst of London dissipation, she would have flown to him on the first whisper of alarm. But the more easy and more humble virtue of resigning an evening of projected pleasure and the triumphs of vanity, in order to be restored to him one day sooner, and prove her undecayed affection by a little sacrifice—one of those little and habitual sacrifices which prove affection even more than great ones do, because no fame, no praise, attends on the performance of them;—to this she had proved herself unequal; nor could she tear herself away from the fascinations of London, till she feared for the peace of one child, and for the morals of the other.

But in the latter case the danger was too strongly marked not to be avoided directly, and the duty too evident not to be instantly performed; while the other was a more remote duty, and the danger attending on its non-performance more imperceptible and more gradual. When one meets a chimney-sweep in a narrow path, one takes care to avoid the certain and obvious contamination of his touch; but we are not conscious of the more gradual and imperceptible, but as certain destruction of the purity of our garments, from dust and the common effects of constant wear.

The travellers, who did not stop on the road, got on rapidly till the evening began to close in; and then they were forced to stop one stage before they meant to do so, by the impossibility of getting horses to go on with. But luckily they at this moment saw one of Derville's parishioners, who was returning home on horseback; and as Mrs. Derville's last letter had told him not to expect her the next day, she was very glad to be able to send him word that she was within a few hours' drive of home.

The next morning she was still detained for want of horses; and it was evening before the hills that formed the vale of Lovelands, the small lake which sparkles in its bosom, and the velvet lawn, on which stood the vine, and honeysuckle, and covered parsonage, burst upon their view. The hues of the setting sun were diffusing over it a richer beauty, and Lionel exclaimed, "Oh! this is far more beautiful even than the Lawn-house."

"It is our home, so we ought to think it so," said Jane, whose eye now wandered in search of an object whom she did not see, but who she thought might be watching for the sight of the sound of her chariot wheels. Mrs. Derville did not speak; her heart was too full for utterance, especially as (on a hill which commanded the winding of the road) she discovered her husband watching for her arrival. His delighted children eagerly waved their handkerchiefs to him in token of recognition; but the more deeply feeling wife, after looking one moment out of the front window, threw herself into one corner of the carriage, and hid her face with her handkerchief. In a few moments Derville descended the hill, and was at the gate to throw it open for the admission of the travellers. He could only look his welcome as they passed him, but that look was eloquent.

Mrs. Derville when the carriage stopped was quite overcome by various feelings and recollections, and knew not how she got into the house; but she recovered to find herself leaning on the bosom of her husband, and to meet again those eyes of unabated love which had gazed on her with equal tenderness through so many endeared and happy years. What was London with all its joys to that moment of re-union! She was now encircled by all she loved best in the world; and as her husband fervently exclaimed, "They are restored to me in safety! Father of mercies, I thank thee!" she echoed with quivering lip the impulsive prayer, and felt with Mrs. Arlington that she was indeed a woman *to be envied.*

"But you look thin, Frederick!" said Mrs. Derville anxiously, "and rather pale."

"No wonder; I have had hard duty to perform."

"Do not talk of it—I can't bear to think of the danger you have been in."

"You must think of it, that you may be grateful for my escape. Oh! they were indeed trying scenes; and when I returned home it was most trying; instead of finding an anxious and affectionate wife to welcome me, and dear attentive children,—to enter a solitary dwelling, uncheered by the sight of domestic comfort! But I was supported under it all; and I was cheered by the consideration that I was doing my duty, and also by the blessed

certainty that my wife and children were beyond the reach of the fatal contagion around me. But you are all mine again, and my pain is well repaid."

Mrs. Derville was this evening too full of the happiness of affection to draw unfavourable comparisons between the humble parsonage and more splendid abodes; though every now and then she cast a measuring eye around her, and thought, though she did not say it, "I could not have believed these rooms were so small!" But poor Mary Ann fancied that she had great cause for disquiet, and she was loud in her expressions of it; for after the first joy of seeing her had subsided, Nelly had left her to return to her puppies, who came into the world only the day before, and Mary Ann could be pacified only by her father's assurances, that it would ill become Cornelia to leave her young Gracchi long, on any occasion whatever.

While the travellers were enjoying the refreshment of tea after their journey, Mrs. Derville, in answer to her husband's question of "But who is Mrs. Arlington?" put her letter to him in his hand, saying, "Mrs. Arlington is an angel!" And Mr. Derville read with no inconsiderable emotion the eulogy on his wife, and the account of the service she had received from her.

"Then it is really so, is it, and you *did* save her life? Mary Ann told me just now that Mrs. Arlington fell into the water, and she verily believed but for you she would have been drowned; but I really thought the dear child spoke probably from the exaggerated accounts of the servants, as she did not see the scene."

"Oh, no indeed, father," cried Lionel and Jane, eager to do honour to their mother, and to do her the justice she deserved; "My mother's presence of mind did *indeed* save her life; and when she recovered, it was the first thing Mrs. Arlington said to her servants—'Take notice, this lady saved my life.'"

Derville looked at his eager and affectionate children with a glistening and approving eye, and then bestowed most eloquent and gratifying praise on his wife, and earnest congratulations on the result of her self-possession; forgetting wholly, that if she from a simple exertion of presence of mind was so worthy of such tender encomiums, and deserving as Mrs. Arlington said of her eternal gratitude, how great, how ardent, and how extensive must be the praises which he deserved, and how eternal ought to be the gratitude, to which *he* had a claim, from the many poor and humble individuals whom his care and his bounties had been the visible means of saving from the grave;—saved, too, by the perpetual recurrence of personal danger to himself! But Derville, though ever alive to merit in others, never thought of his own; and simply because his actions were never prompted by the wish to deserve the applause of man; he acted on a higher principle and a nobler ambition; and really, while he admired his wife's meritorious presence of mind and resolute exertions to preserve Mrs. Arlington, he was not conscious that, though there was more of *éclat*, and of stage effect, in what *she* had done,—his life for a succession of days had been marked by efforts more trying, more painful, and more virtuous, and followed by results full as worthy of congratulations such as he was now bestowing on Mrs. Derville.

How happily and how rapidly flew that evening!—how impossible was it for Mrs. Derville to regret London or even the Lawnhouse and its conveniences! But the next day when Mrs. Derville sat down to dinner, she could not help saying, "I cannot bear that plain queen's-ware, I must get a set of the blue china." And when she desired the maid-servant who waited to change her plate, she observed that "it seemed so strange to be waited on at table by a female servant, as she had been so long used to footmen."

"True," said Derville, "you kept a footman in London, and occasionally had horses to the carriage. That was really living in some sort of style, and as you would always have lived, had not Anna Pointz been a pretty idiot, and preferred the gratifications of love to those of ambition."

This allusion to past seasons was well timed; it dissipated the returning wish for style beyond her reach; and looking on her husband with eyes that did justice to her feelings, she replied, "*Anna Derville* has never yet repented, nor ever can, the choice of Anna Pointz. No, Mr. Derville, whatever else may have been my weaknesses, I have never had a vision of grandeur unshared with you!" and while she spoke, tears filled her eyes, and her voice faltered with emotion.—Derville was surprised, and he might have quoted the French proverb, *Qui s'excuse, s'accuse.*

"My dearest love," said he, "I never suspected you *had* imagined any happiness independent of me as a sharer in it, and I never suspected or accused you of any weaknesses."

"Oh no, that I am sure you never did," said the self-upbraided wife; "yet weak I have been, very weak;—but I will tell you all."

Derville was confounded; and he looked at his children, as if to remind his wife of their presence; yet he felt assured that the weakness could not be much which she was so willing to own before such witnesses. "Well, my dear, well," said he, after a pause; "if it will be any relief to your mind to confess to me, I will certainly listen to you; else I should be quite easy to hear no more, as my confidence in you is entire and unbounded."

It is impossible to account for the inconsistencies of human feeling. Flattering to her best feelings as her husband's declared confi-

dence in her must be, Mrs. Derville was rather mortified that her husband was not a little, a *very* little jealous; and she wished, as she had often done before, that he had seen how much she had been admired in London.

The next impulse was to exclaim, "Oh, *à-propos!* you remember that I wrote you word I saw Lord L. in London?"

"*A-propos* to what?" replied Derville, a shade passing across his brow, and a deep flush overspreading his cheek; "not *à-propos* to your weaknesses, I conclude?" he added with a smile.

Mrs. Derville now blushed with somewhat of an indignant feeling, because she felt angry that he could for a moment entertain a jealous doubt. But it was indeed only for a moment; and Derville's heart instantly reproached him, while with the most perfect ease he said, "Well, and how does Lord L. look? Does the peerage become him, and he the peerage? and did he ask for me? Till we became rivals, he was, you know, very fond of me."

"You ask me so many questions at once," said Mrs. Derville rather crossly, "I do not know which to answer first. Lord L. looks old for his years; but his manners are the same. He is not rendered proud by the accession of rank.—He did ask after you when we first met; but though I often saw him, I did not often converse with him."

"No! How strange! I should have thought it must have been so pleasant to you to meet with an old friend amongst strangers!"

"To meet with an old friend merely, would have been so; but——"

Here she was interrupted by Jane's exclaiming, "Lord L.! Oh! that was the gentleman, mamma, who used to look so fixedly at you, and quite disconcert you by his gaze; —and then he used to sigh so deeply."

"Yes; and when you used to sing," said Lionel, "he used to hold his head on one side and look so ridiculously affected."

At another time Derville would have chided his son for speaking severely of any one; but now he was not sorry to hear him say that Lord L. looked ridiculous and affected.

"Is this true, Anna?" said he smiling. "Did Lord L. exhibit these symptoms of still existing love?"

"He did."

"O fy! it was very wrong in him. However, poor man, I ought to pity him, and do most sincerely."

"But you would not have had me converse much with him, I suppose?"

"No, certainly not; and I commend you for not doing so, as, untold, I am sure you did not."

"On the contrary I avoided conversation with him, as I resented his boldness in daring to betray feelings which it was culpable in him to feel, and degrading to me to witness the expression of."

"Poor Lord L." cried Derville; "and so not even his coronet could procure him one smile in reward for his obtruded constancy? I am sure then I do not envy him his peerage, Anna!"

"It is a fine thing to be a peer, Derville, and I have often caught myself of late wishing you were one."

"Me a peer!"

"Yes; are not bishops peers?"

"And do you really wish me a bishop, Anna? Do you wish to leave this peaceful retreat, in which we have been so happy?"

"I do sometimes; though I never wished to be Lady L."

"Well, well," said Derville, "I must, I see, forgive you what you have wished, in favour of what you have not."

"Why, papa," cried Jane, "what merit is there in mamma's not wishing herself married to Lord L.? You are ten times younger-looking and handsomer than he is; and when I have taught you to tie your neckcloth as Lord N. does—" she continued, fondly hanging about him as she spoke—

"And when *I*," said Lionel (smoothing down his dark and glossy hair) "have taught you to brush your hair in front *à la mode de* Sir Mordaunt Williams and myself—why then—"

"Why *then*," cried Derville laughing, "you will have made me an old coxcomb!"

"Old! *old*, papa! I am sure I did not see any man to compare to you during my absence, not even in beauty; — fashion, you know, is another thing."

"But come, Anna, is there no alteration in your old-fashioned husband that *you* wish to make?" cried Derville, as his wife drew near the affectionate group.

"None," said she, as she threw herself into his extended arms; "thou hast no faults, or I no faults can spy." And again Mrs. Derville retired to rest, feeling and owning herself the happiest woman in the world. That evening too had brought a few lines from Mrs. Arlington, assuring her of her continued health, and grateful love.

The next morning she rose, meaning to be very notable and to resume her household duties directly; but she went over her house, made a great bustle, seemed very busy, and did nothing.

"What furniture and plate, &c., have you brought down with you?" asked Derville, when they met at dinner. "I have heard very little of Lady Anne's legacy!"

"There is little to hear. I was much disappointed in its value; and Mr. Farrel and I agreed that I had better sell most of the furniture and some of the china ornaments and plate, and buy new,—I should have liked to have had two or three things which I gave up to Lady Lucy."

"And why did you not take them?"

"Because she wished to have them; and she was so civil that I really had a pleasure in obliging her—though Mr. Farrell advised me not."

"Interest would make any one civil; however, I had rather she should be able to say that you were generous, than that you were selfish. But now be so good as to tell me more about Mrs. Arlington; her letter to me bespeaks a woman of education; of great kindness of heart; and her invitation is a tempting one; but this is all I know, and I believe you know little more."

"No, we do not; except that she is one of the most beautiful, graceful, accomplished and enviable of women."

"Enviable! Has she a husband and children, Anna?"

"Not children, certainly; and perhaps not a husband; and so far," said she smiling, "I know women more to be envied;—but her house, her grounds, her style of living—indeed, Derville, I should like to live just like Mrs. Arlington; I mean with you and my children, not without."

"But still you do not know who she is?" Here the entrance of Mr. Travers put a stop to the conversation, but it was renewed as soon as he was seated.

"Well, Travers," said Mr. Derville, "I can't find out who my wife's new friend is."

"I begin to think I have discovered," replied Mr. Travers; "but my ideas and recollections on the subject are very imperfect and confused. I think she was a Miss Louisa Fortescue. But Arlington is not her real name."

"Not her *real* name!" exclaimed his auditors in some consternation.

"No; for some reason or other I suspect that she is separated from her husband, whose name I think is Seymour."

"Seymour!" exclaimed Jane; "then we saw his picture. There was a curtain before it, which I undrew. It was the picture of a very handsome man, and I asked who it was. I remember now that she sighed deeply, turned away, and said, 'that gentleman's name is Seymour.'"

"Very strange! and very mysterious!" said Derville thoughtfully.

"It has always a bad appearance," said Travers, "when a wife is separated from her husband, and lives in such splendour! and this lady too goes by another name, and that not her maiden name! Surely, before you continue this intimacy, you ought to inquire more concerning this lady, for Jane's sake, and also for yours, my dear madam, for you are as yet too young and too lovely to be known to associate with ladies of doubtful character."

"My dear sir," eagerly replied Mrs. Derville, "it is true that I have had no means of knowing how women who are not good, look, and talk, and behave; but I feel it to be impossible, that any woman can look, and talk, and act like Mrs. Arlington, who is not pure and faultless in thought and in deed."

"You are pure yourself, my dear madam, and therefore it is impossible for you to suspect the purity of another. Those who are consciously good are not apt to suspect the virtue of others."

"Then how is it that you suspect Mrs. Arlington, sir?"

"Fairly retorted," cried Derville.

"But you must own," said Mr. Travers, "that the situation is a singular one?"

"True; but all singular situations are not guilty ones. For instance, what must any one have thought, who knew the danger to which my husband was exposed from the contagion in Lovelands, if they had heard me singing, and seen me going about to parties, and enjoying myself, as if all was well and safe at home? This was a suspicious situation. Yet still—how innocent I was even of impropriety at the moment!"

"Well," replied Derville, with a benevolent smile, "I like to hear you defend your new acquaintance, and I will answer her letter; but it may be as well to make some inquiries concerning her, and Farrell will do it for us. But come, before it is dark let us take a walk and visit some of my parishioners; though even now I will not allow you to go into all the cottages, lest there be any remains of infection."

"No, no," said Mr. Travers, "do you stay at home, or go somewhere else; I want to have a *tête-à-tête* with your wife, and I choose to have it now."

"Very well; but I suppose I may be allowed to come and meet you? and in the meanwhile I will take the children to see a new prospect station which I have discovered."

When they were alone together, Mr. Travers told Mrs. Derville that he wished her to visit the cottagers and others of the parishioners without her husband, that she might have the delight of hearing his praises from their own lips, a tribute of which respect would prevent their payment in his presence; and Mrs. Derville thanked him heartily for his considerate attention.

Nor was it needless; and the delighted Mrs. Derville enjoyed that gratification most dear to the heart of a virtuous and affectionate wife,—the well-earned praises and blessings bestowed on a beloved husband by grateful beings whom he had either served, saved, or consoled.

When Derville met them on their return, the flushed cheeks, and red, tearful eyes of his wife filled him at first with anxiety; but the affectionate smile and tender pressure of his hand with which she welcomed him, soon dissipated his alarm; and Travers kindly said, "Do not regret your wife's tears, for they

are the tears of pride and of happiness." And that evening she again forgot that the rooms were small, and that the supper was served on queen's-ware. The next day brought another letter from Mrs. Arlington in answer to one which Mrs. Derville had written to announce her safe arrival and happy meeting with her husband; and to which Mary Ann had added a postscript to inform her that Nelly had two puppies, one of which (the handsomest) she was bringing up for her. This letter was a franked one; and on opening it they found a paper enclosed, on the outside of which was written "A christening present for Nelly," and the following note to Mary Ann:

"My dear child,

"I beg my intended pet may be named Caius if it be a dog; and, as is usual on such occasions, I, as a sponsor, send a present, of which, however, you are to have the sole disposal under the direction and care of your good father, who will, I am sure, dispose of it in the best possible manner for the benefit of the young Gracchi. Your affectionate friend, LOUISA ARLINGTON."

The paper was opened, and the delighted but wondering Mary Ann held up three bank-notes. The amount was—— but I will not say what it was, for I know that some of my readers will say, "nonsense! it was far too much for her to give!" and others would exclaim, "shame on her! she ought to have given a great deal more, if she meant to show her gratitude to the mother for her having saved her life." Therefore, I will avoid all risk of offending the prudent and the money-loving on one hand, and the over-generous on the other, who are usually, alas! those who have nothing to give,—and will not disclose the amount of the bank-notes, except by implication. When Derville saw the notes, he would have given one of them at that moment to be sure that Mrs. Arlington was, and always had been, the angel which his wife described her to be; as, though he saw that this gift was only the result of a generous, and, perhaps, a proud heart, eager to show its sense of a benefit received, and that this gift would only be the forerunner of more bounties; still, what he could have received with pleasure from the hand of unblemished excellence, he shrunk from receiving from that of doubtful virtue. But he discarded the uncandid thought again immediately; and while his wife and elder children expatiated with delight on the handsome manner in which Mrs. Arlington had contrived to make her present, he took the amazed and perplexed Mary Ann on his knee, to explain to her what Mrs. Arlington meant, and what they admired.

"But papa," said Mary Ann, "what was there so charming in Mrs. Arlington's sending bank-notes for the puppy? If it was any body else, I should say it was silly; for you know, papa, if I were to give it to him, he would only tear it in pieces."

"Very true; but you are not ordered to give it to him; you are told to give it to me—that is, to put it under my care, as I shall know how to dispose of it for the benefit of the young Gracchi."

"Yes."

"Well then, listen, Mary Ann! I shall put this money out to interest, and it will bring in such a sum; and as you are the mistress of Nelly and her puppies, it will enable you, you see, to provide very handsomely for them indeed—a chicken now and then, or a bottle of wine and fine fruit, and so on."

"O dear, papa, but it would be quite a shame to give dogs such things! And besides, they don't want them, and would be just as happy without; and that money would buy you something, and mamma, and Lionel, and sister, and me too, papa. O dear! I am sure Mrs. Arlington can't expect me to lay out that money on dogs."

"No, my child," replied Derville, "no; Mrs. Arlington has no such wish; and now, therefore, perhaps you will understand why your mother and Lionel and Jane were so charmed with the delicate manner in which she made you this present, by pretending it was for the puppy on its being named."

"Then it was make-believe, papa, and I thought that was wrong."

"So make-believe always is, my dear, when meant to deceive; but this was meant for no such purpose. Now listen, Mary Ann; Mrs. Arlington is a very rich lady, and your mother has saved her life; now we are not rich; and though our income is good, part of it is only life income; therefore, though Lionel at my death will have my living, as it is a family one, the rest of my fortune will not be large enough to enable me to leave much to you and Jane;—this present, then, to you, will be a welcome addition to your fortune, Mary Ann."

"My fortune, papa! Why, to be sure, you will give half to Jane! I shall not keep it all?"

"Good child," said the gratified father; while Jane kissed her glowing cheek. "Yes, my dear, you must keep it all, or I will keep it for you, for such was the design of the donor; and I am very sure that she will find some way of being equally generous to Lionel and Jane—but all in good time."

"So am I," said Mrs. Derville; and Lionel and Jane silently acquiesced in the opinion.

"But now listen again, Mary Ann. You are only eight, I think.

"O yes! I am almost nine, papa."

"Well, this money put out to interest, (and I can get five per cent. for it, I know, in some of the public stocks,) if we let the interest

accumulate,—that is, do not take it out and spend it,—will double itself in fourteen years; and by the time you are rather more than two and twenty it will make you a pretty little fortune."

"Me, papa! Oh! how kind in Mrs. Arlington!—But why did she not give it to me at once, and not send it to me for the dogs?"

"I will tell you;—that would have looked as if she said, 'You are poor, and I owe you an obligation; so take this money—I know you want it;—but by giving it thus, she seems to throw a veil over her real motives, and delicately—and"—Derville was really puzzled; and not less so, when Mary Ann interrupted him with, "But after all, papa, it is the same thing, you know, and you are poor, and Mrs. Arlington thinks you so. I cannot see the beauty of all this make-believe." And Derville could not help laughing as he replied, "Indeed, Mary Ann, on second thoughts, no more can I; and if Mrs. Arlington had said, 'I wish to provide for the children, as their mother has served me so greatly, by giving them something out of my superfluity,' I should not have felt justified in being offended, or in refusing; still, I own the manner she adopted showed some delicacy of mind."

"Some! Oh, a great deal!" exclaimed all but Mary Ann, as they were very tenacious of Mrs. Arlington's reputation for every thing exalted; but little Mary Ann, on this occasion, could have exclaimed like Mungo in the farce, "How can me like what me no understand?"

That day, after this new excitement occasioned by this communication from Mrs. Arlington had subsided, Mrs. Derville resumed, but imperfectly, her daily occupations; and she broke off gladly to unpack some things just arrived by the wagons from London. But it was difficult for her to find places for all her acquisitions, and she found that both the china and plate closets must be enlarged, or new ones made. Yet how to do this she did not know, as she designed to convert a sort of light closet, which commanded a fine view and had a tent-bed in it, into a *boudoir*, though how to spare the room was a consideration of no small difficulty. "Little did I think I had so many wants!" said Mrs. Derville as she looked over her rooms and her furniture; "it is surprising how I could be so long satisfied with such a slender store of conveniences! Positively, we have hardly a chair fit to sit upon; I must have *chaises longues* instead of that lumbering old-fashioned sofa."

Nor was it long before she made a general complaint to her husband of the impossibility to exist any longer without certain articles, to obtain which part of the legacy must be expended; "and I assure you," she added, "Lionel is very willing to engage to spend the less the first year at college."

"Well, that is as you and he please," replied Derville gravely; "Lionel is your child as well as mine, and his college comforts must be as dear to you as to me;—if he is willing to spend less on real necessaries that you may spend more on fancied wants, so be it."

"*Fancied* wants! Mr. Derville."

"Yes, my dear; are they not so? The sofa is quite as good as it ever was, though it is not so new-fashioned; and we have hitherto been so happy and so good-natured, that we have not needed a *boudoir*, or room to pout in —is not that the proper translation of the word *boudoir*, Anna?"

"Nonsense!" cried Mrs. Derville pettishly; "call it dressing-room if you will. I want a room I can call my own, to sit in in a morning, and receive company in."

"Have you not two parlours?"

"Yes."

"And will they not hold morning visiters more conveniently than a closet? I conclude you do not mean to put the *boudoir* to the original use of such apartments,—that of an apartment sacred to a *tête-à-tête?*"

Mrs. Derville, conscious that her husband's raillery and observations were just, felt a little angry, and replied that "indeed she had no room quite big enough to breathe freely in, and that the house now seemed to her quite a nutshell."

"But a nutshell still full of its sweet-flavoured meat, I hope?" he gently replied. "If your rooms are small, they have hitherto been 'little rooms of great comfort,' Anna, have they not? and I trust they will be so again. If not, O Mrs. Arlington! your postilion and you will have much to answer for!"

So saying, with a pained and mortified expression of countenance he left the room; and Mrs. Derville, finding, on consulting with the carpenter whom she had sent for, that enlarging the closets would cost a great deal of money, resolved to give up converting the closet up stairs into a *boudoir* which she did not want, but to convert it into a china-closet which she did want; as Lady Anne's bequest of china was really large and handsome. Some of the vases and dishes, however, in imitation of Lady Lucy and Mrs. Arlington, she resolved, though at the risk of having them thrown down, to set in her drawing-room, (as she now called the best parlour,) on brackets, and in stands made for the purpose.

When she next saw her husband, it was with the painful consciousness that her dissatisfaction with the comparative poverty and smallness of her home had given him pain; but the resolution she had made to carry her point, and make her house as elegant as possible, determined her to conquer the impulse of her heart, and to prove to him by her silence relative to what he had said when he left the room, that without the indulgences which she required, her comfort in her home could never in future be what it had been;

and this was the first uncomfortable meal the husband and wife had ever eaten together.

Mrs. Derville only spoke to complain of the uncomfortableness of the chairs, and to declare that they were so large and wide, they made the little room still less; — then the tables had better be sent to London to be sold, and the new-fashioned table, that shuts up and draws out, bought in its stead. As to the sofa, that was not to be borne with a day longer. "How ungrateful this is in you, Anna," said Derville reproachfully, "when you must recollect how comfortably you have often reclined on it after your confinements or little illnesses, and declared, while I sat on one side of it reading you to sleep, that no bed was ever more comfortable! Anna, the couch is the same, and your nurse is also unchanged—but—" here he paused, and starting up abruptly left the room.

When once persons are very wrong, it is difficult to get right again—and Mrs. Derville felt this. Her heart whispered, "Follow your husband, and tell him you are no more altered than he or the sofa, and that you own the sofa is a very good sofa." But pride whispered, that Derville did not make sufficient allowances for the different life which she had lately led, and the elegant style of furniture, &c. to which she had lately been accustomed; and that he ought not to resent so highly her very natural dissatisfaction with accommodations so very different to those which she had left. "What would Lady Lucy say, and what would Lord this, or Lady t'other think, if they were to visit her by chance, and see how unstylish every thing about her was? No, for his own sake, and especially in case Mrs. Arlington should ever be their guest, she must get things a little smart about her—" And she did not follow her husband.

Derville wandered out to the furthest and most lonely extremity of the banks of the lake, not only to conceal his emotion from every eye, but also to commune with his own heart, and ask himself whether he did not too keenly feel these little follies of his wife, and too visibly resent them. She had been, he heard from Lionel, excessively admired and courted whithersoever she went; and he saw that if she had given him encouragement, she might have led her old lover, now an admired man of high rank, an avowed captive in her chains. But this vicious indulgence of her vanity, not only exclusive love for him had forbidden, but principle and an innate delicacy and purity of feeling, which led her to loathe even the appearance of a homage repugnant to good morals. Why then should he so severely judge such a slight evidence of woman's weakness in her?

"I was wrong—I was very wrong; and by such expressions of my quick feelings I am not likely to reconcile her to retirement and to her home, if indeed, as it now seems, her heart is in a degree alienated from it. Well then, I will return home and seek her out, and speak kindly to her; but I dare say I shall meet her coming out in search of me."

His hopes, however, deceived him, and he found Mrs. Derville still in the parlour, and looking over some new silver forks which were just arrived. She turned her head on his entrance, and held up one to him with a forced smile; but her look was calm, and to his surprise he saw no traces of tears on her cheek, though he had evidently twice that day left her with wounded feelings. Then she was indeed changed, he thought; for he knew not the effort Mrs. Derville made to suppress the marks of feeling which he had so anxiously sought.

At this moment Jane entered, followed by Edward Eustace, the young curate, who had obtained her father's and mother's permission to try to win her affections, and who, till this unfortunate journey to London, Derville hoped had very nearly succeeded, as his conduct was unimpeachable, and his situation in life good. Jane's mother had been content to marry an humble country clergyman,—and why should her daughter, who had not more beauty or more accomplishments, and had certainly much less fortune, aspire to a more lofty connexion?—He therefore was not sorry to see Jane return free even in her affections, and he now welcomed Eustace to the house with even parental ardour.

Mrs. Derville, he thought, was rather cold in her welcome; but then he knew that he had vexed her; but Jane's manner distressed him beyond measure, and he saw that it rendered Eustace excessively unhappy. The truth was, Jane had flattered herself that Eustace, who lived at the next village, would be watching for her return; and she was so much disappointed at not seeing him, that she resolved to revenge herself on him by treating him with cold, supercilious civility—and she was no bad imitator of Miss Orme's manner to herself. When he offered to set her a chair, she begged he would not trouble himself;—when she dropped her needle, she declared he was too good to make an effort to find it;—and when he presented it to her, she took it with a smile, but did not look at him while she thanked him.

Lionel had not yet seen Eustace; and when he entered the room, the unaffected cordiality of his manner would have made him amends for the coldness of Jane's, if the attentions of friendship could ever make the heart that loves amends for the neglect and the disdain of the object beloved.

Lionel's eyes sparkled and his cheek glowed at sight of his friend; and Derville said to himself, "At least there is one of them unsophisticated and unchanged!"

"Well, Eustace, how are you? I am delighted to see you," exclaimed Lionel, as Eus-

tace, expressing his welcome more by an agitated grasp of his hand than by words, arose to meet him; "But where were you the evening we arrived? and why have we not seen you before? I assure you, Jane and I both expected to see you on the road, to give us a welcome, just before we turn off at the gate that leads to your house."

Jane at these words pretended to take up and examine the silver forks, as she could not deny what Lionel said, and did not like to seem to hear it without denying it; but she very anxiously expected the answer; and her father was no uninterested and unobservant spectator of what was passing.

"It was my intention to be waiting at that very gate," said Eustace; "but just as I was setting off for it, I was summoned to do duty at a church some miles off, where the minister was suddenly taken ill as he was going to bury a corpse; nor would he allow me to come away—because he was sure he was dying—till this very evening; and then, being suffered to leave him, I came hither, without even going home."

"Now I shall see what effect this has on Jane," thought her anxious father; and to his inexpressible joy he saw her turn round with a blushing cheek and a smile of the sweetest animation; and holding out one of the forks to Eustace, "See!" she cried, "what extravagances we have been guilty of!"

There was nothing in the action itself, but the manner of it was every thing. Eustace took the fork, his eyes met hers; he understood her late coldness and supercilious civility; his heart beat with renewed hope; and as he pressed her hand on returning the fork, he thought, nay he was sure, the pressure was gently returned.

Derville's heart was also lightened of this new load, and in time he was sure his wife would be kind to him again.

The servant now brought in a packet that came by the post, franked by a secretary of state. It was large, and evidently contained nothing but writing. I was directed to Mrs. Derville. She eagerly opened it, and found it was from Mrs. Arlington.

Mrs. Derville read a few minutes to herself; but her bosom soon heaved, and her eyes filled with tears; till at length, unable to subdue her feelings, she threw herself on her husband's neck, and faintly murmuring out "Forgive me, my best love!" she hid her face on his shoulder.

Mrs. Arlington wrote as follows:

THE HISTORY OF MRS. ARLINGTON.

"The Lawn-House.

"From a palace, the seat of sad and solitary grandeur, I address you at your simple dwelling, the abode of maternal love and of wedded happiness. Long after you left me, I followed your carriage-wheels in fancy, and envied you your progress; for you were hastening to the home of your youth and the husband of your heart, and that husband a being to glory in. And I smiled with bitterness while I remembered that to you I had appeared an object of envy;—Ay, and perhaps I appear so still; for I am doubtful of what may be your feelings when this packet reaches you.

"A few days will then have elapsed since your reunion with this beloved husband; and after the first fond emotions have subsided, the ambitious love of grandeur and luxuries of life, which new circumstances had, I saw, awakened in your bosom, will have had leisure to show itself; and already I can fancy you projecting alterations, devising new expenses, and a little angry with Mr. Derville for not sympathizing with you in your wants and dissatisfactions. Yes; methinks I can behold unusual gloom over his placid brow, and a feeling of discontent, for the first time in your life, damping your former consciousness of being blest beyond your sex's charter. If I have fancied and foreboded aright, repent the unworthy and ungrateful sensations; hasten in penitent love to implore the pardon of that husband, whom your woman's weakness, however excusable, may have wounded; and when you have been clasped to his forgiving bosom, read to your family the pages, which for your sake I have written—written to convince you how blest your lot has been; and that, were your residence a hovel, such a partner of it should make it a paradise—written to make you for ever a stranger to aught of frivolous repinings and frivolous wishes, and to bid you bend in humble and contrite thankfulness to Heaven, while you read the history of Louisa Arlington."

Mrs. Derville had read thus far, when, unable to endure any longer the reproaches of her own heart, thus powerfully called into action, she addressed her husband as mentioned above; and when Eustace was gone, Derville read the following narrative to his deeply interested wife and children:

"I was the only surviving child of many, and was consequently watched over with more than the usual care of parental affection. But my parents though tender were judicious, and their fondness did not show itself in unbounded indulgence of all my desires, the result always of selfishness rather than well-principled affection; but it manifested itself in such salutary restraints and wise contradictions, as are best calculated to secure the future good of its object.

"It is often difficult to say what is cause, and what is effect;—but whether my education influenced my temper, or my temper was fitted to profit by my education, I know not; certain however it is, that I was gentle and submissive under parental authority, and that nothing could equal my obedience to my

parents, but my veneration and my love for them.

"My grandfather on the paternal side, though the younger son of a nobleman, had entered into trade, and made a very large fortune, and my father was his only child. I therefore was an heiress of considerable expectations, consequently, no expense was spared on my education; and as I had early evinced a talent for music, the first masters were employed to perfect me both in singing, and in playing on different instruments; and, till I was sixteen, our winters were all passed in London. But at that time my mother's health became so much affected by the fogs of the metropolis, that we removed to an estate which my father had recently purchased in the immediate vicinity of a large provincial town, and my musical instructers promised that they would continue their lessons occasionally at our own house, when the London season was over.

"There was a regiment of dragoon guards quartered in the town near which we resided; and though I was not what is called *out*, being at the time I mention not seventeen, I was nevertheless well acquainted with the officers; and one of them, a young lieutenant, though he paid me no particular attention, and seemed to consider me as a child, engaged my exclusive admiration.

"If personal beauty in a man can excuse affection in woman, he had sufficient to justify the most unbounded; but he had much more effective and certain recommendations, — a grace of manner which I never yet saw equalled, and a tone of voice which when once heard could never be forgotten.

"This dangerous young man did not remain long with the regiment at this period; for he was sent away on a recruiting party, leaving behind him a character for extravagance and immorality, which those who admired him, and myself amongst the rest, excused on the score of his youth. But I, however charmed, should have forgotten him, had he not returned to the regiment at the period when all officers join, and just time enough to witness my first appearance at a public ball.

"It is not to be supposed that the heiress of the rich Mr. Fortescue could appear at her first ball without being an object of notice, if not of admiration; and perhaps I was both;—certainly, to the young lieutenant I seemed to be an object of both;—and as he was the son of a baronet, and his connexions were good, my father could not object to him as a partner for his daughter.

"But why should I dwell on the dangerous pleasures of that evening, and of many that succeeded it?

"I was prepared to like him from my previous impressions in his favour, spite of his imputed errors; and he succeeded only too well in convincing me that he loved me.

"At length he made me proposals of marriage; and I referred him to my parents, who had always declared that, as money was no object with them, they would never object to any one whom I loved, provided his character was unexceptionable, and he was likely to made me happy.

"To be brief; my father unequivocally rejected my lover's suit, and gave him his reasons why he did so, as I afterwards too well knew. He told him that, being aware of my growing partiality for him, he had made minute inquiries into his character and disposition, and that he must be well aware what the result of his inquiries had been; that he had learnt his temper, when not restrained by powerful motives, such as those of interest and fear, was taunting, tormenting, and tyrannical; and what his habits of life were, it did not, he added, become him to discuss; that therefore, however distinguished his family was, and however fascinating his manners, such a man should never, with his consent, be the husband of his daughter.

"My lover pleaded his youth, as an excuse for his errors, and assured my father, that as his love for me would make him wax in my hands, his irritability of temper would be conquered by my gentleness and endearing qualities. But he argued in vain, and his suit was positively rejected; and my mother was desired by my considerate father to break his commands on this subject to me.

"Though in a degree prepared for the communication, as I had always seen my father's eye sternly fixed on him, and anxiously on me, whenever he had been present at our interviews, it completely overwhelmed me; and my distress was such, that my indulgent mother promised to prevail on my father, if possible, to say, that if my lover in process of time should seem to have repented the error of his ways, and to be a reformed character both in habits and temper, he would allow him to visit at the house. But her efforts were unavailing, and I saw myself apparently for ever separated from the man who I believed had been in a great measure belied, from the calumnies of those who envied him his charms and his accomplishments, and whom, in spite of parental prohibition and of my usual obedience to it, I tenderly and fervently loved. And my lover was careful to keep up the impression which he had made, by throwing himself in my way whenever he had any opportunity. He used to watch my father from his home; and then, if my mother and I drove out, or I rode out with the servant, I used to see him leaning on some gate in the road, and looking the very picture of hopeless misery; while he took care that every one should be able to tell us that he shut himself up, never dined at mess, and was looking woe-worn and pale—an altered man in every respect. All this had a powerful effect on my mother as

well as on myself; and when she saw that I too grew thin and looked pale, she thought my father carried his resolution too far, and that he had been too severe in his judgment, and too positive in his refusal.

"At this time my father was forced to go on business to London; and he had not been gone long, when my lover wrote to my mother, whose pitying looks when he met us had not been lost on him, enclosing a letter for myself, which respect for parental authority, and my principles, prevented him, he said, from attempting even to get delivered another way; but which he earnestly conjured her, if she valued his well-being here and his salvation hereafter, to allow me to read.

"My mother was affected by the solemn earnestness of his adjuration; softened by his apparent misery, and flattered probably by the consciousness that love for her daughter was its cause;—and *my father was absent.*

"Accordingly she allowed me to read this fatal letter, the contents of which remained indelibly engraven on my mind. He owned and lamented the irritability of his temper, and the errors into which youth and the ardour of his passions had led him; but that, as the influence of virtuous love was even proverbial, and he had never felt it till now, he was sure that if I would but be his wife, I should not only reform and render exemplary his conduct on earth, but I should save his soul from otherwise inevitable destruction, and lead a sinner to repentance and to mercy.

"From that moment I resolved on principle not to attempt to subdue my attachment, and my mother herself espoused his cause; while I saw with satisfaction that my mind preyed on my health, and that my appearance was so indicative of indisposition, that my father on his return could not fail to be struck with the alteration.

"He was struck with it indeed,—nay, the sight overwhelmed him. He beheld the darling of his heart, the sole survivor of many beloved children, apparently about to follow them to the grave, the victim of a hopeless attachment. Yet painful as this apprehension was, he thought he could better bear to see me die, than unite myself to a man such as he believed my lover to be, and who would no doubt render my existence wretched.

"But he miscalculated the strength of his resolution; and he found at last, that any thing was preferable to seeing me die by inches, willed as it were to perish by him; and if I must perish, he felt that he had rather I should die the victim of my own obstinacy, than of his. In short, as my mother was openly our friend, and my father's own heart betrayed him, we carried our point; and as soon as Mr. Seymour had left the army, we were married.

"Various and severe were the animadversions which my persevering attachment occasioned; and I was accused of having married from motives of vanity—the vanity of believing that my charms of person and of mind would reclaim a libertine. But those accusers were superficial judges of the human heart, and of mine. I married *because I loved*—because no common attractions of manner and person had fascinated my taste, and thrown a spell over my judgment; and that, like all women in love, I had implicit reliance on the assurances of the beloved object. He said that not only his happiness and his virtue depended on my becoming his wife, but his salvation—and I believed him. Can my union with him after that be a matter of wonder?

"Well, we were married; and my generous father was not only most liberal in his settlements on me, but he was bountiful to my husband also; and he seemed so impressed by my father's noble conduct, and paid him such marked and flattering attention, that my mother blessed the hour when she became his advocate; and I looked forward to days of uninterrupted happiness.

"My mother did not long survive our union, and she died blessing it, and believing it would be blest.

"We had not been married many months when we went on a tour through Scotland; during which (when alone and unrestrained by my father's presence, who, with a cousin of his, accompanied us on our journey,) I discovered that my husband's temper, though restrained, was not improved; and I began to see on what a sandy foundation the fabric of my wedded bliss was built.

"But my resolution was instantly taken to bear whatever he inflicted with patience and in silence, and endeavour to conceal for ever from all eyes, but more especially from the eyes of my father, the misery for which I had only to blame my own weakness, blindness, and obstinate attachment; and, like the Spartan boy, I resolved to hide from every eye the pangs which would probably prey on my vitals.

"When we returned from Scotland we took a house in town, and I left the paternal roof. O the agony, the foreboding agony, of that moment! But the education which I had received had taught me self-command; and I was able to take leave of my agitated and agonized parent with such quiet and subdued sorrow, in appearance, as astonished even myself. But its secret violence did not escape my conscious husband: he saw that my eyes were opened to the fate that awaited me; and as he bore me from my once happy home, he resolved to wear no longer the mask that had fatigued him.

"As soon as the carriage drove off, he turned round to me, and said, with a smile of bitter sarcasm, 'I never saw finer specimens of despair and resignation than you and your

doting father exhibit, madam; why, you look as if you were just going to execution, and the chaplain was exhorting you! And as to your father,—insolent driveller,—does he think I have forgotten that he refused me for your husband, and had the impudence to tell me why!—to tell me also that he abhorred my morals and feared my temper, and that he had rather follow you to your grave than to the altar with me! If I ever forgive it—'

"Here his utterance became choked with passion, while a mixture of prudence and emotion kept me silent; nor did he speak for several minutes. But the horrible expression of his countenance gradually subsided, nay, it was even exchanged for that of insinuating softness and animated brightness:—It was the rainbow succeeding to the thunder-cloud; and ah! it was transient like that.

"He now condescended to soothe my fluttered spirits, apologized for the violence of his temper, asked me if it was not provoking to see his bride leave her paternal roof for that of a young and adoring husband, looking like a condemned victim going to be sacrificed, and as if all her affections were centred in her father! He also asked if I did not admit that he had reason to be angry with what my father had said to him. And so winning was his manner, so blinded was I by my love, and so willing to be blinded, that I absolutely admitted that both my father and I were wrong, and that his taunting and cruel language was in a degree to be excused. But ours were young connubial days as yet, and I soon found that every future day teemed with similar indulgences of temper, for which not even my blindly devoted love could find an excuse.

"Still, how delightful, how attentive, and how fond, he could seem in company! for he was excessively jealous of his reputation; and being conscious that his temper was suspected to be diabolical, he reproached me with virulence one day for having, he was convinced, injured him in the opinion of the world by my pale cheek and dismal looks, which he was sure, were attributed to him; and he insisted on my wearing rouge to hide my paleness, and by that means stop impertinent observations.

"I obeyed, and even tried to be as gay as I used to be; but my strongest motive for obedience in this particular was the wish to deceive my father, as well as the world, and to lay asleep, if I could, his ever-watchful tenderness.

"And oh! how comforted I felt whenever I was sure that I succeeded! but this was a difficult task;—my father was so restless and so suspicious that all was not right,—especially as he found that my husband spent a great deal of money, and was reported to play high, though I did not know it,—that he was frequently coming to town; and when he came unexpectedly, it was with great difficulty indeed that I could entirely conceal my sufferings;—when I expected him, by the aid of art and great effort I could look what I once was. However, two years had worn away pleasantly enough in company,—for there my husband was all I could wish him, but miserably at home, when I had a prospect of increasing my family. However, my joy was damped by the sorrow which my husband expressed, and by his daily declarations that brats were good for nothing but to bring trouble and expenses on their parents; for which the pleasure of having them was no equivalent; and also by the consciousness which I now had, that as he never had any money for the most trivial wants, he must have means of disposing of his income of which I was wholly ignorant.

"I have hitherto omitted to say, but I will assert it, that had my father wanted other reasons to dislike my marriage with the man of my choice, he had a sufficient one in his desire to marry me to the man of his; and that man was one whom any parent must have delighted in seeing the choice of his child, and any woman might have been proud of making her own. Can I praise him more than by saying that he was in temper and disposition an exact contrast to my husband, and that his countenance was a fit index to the mind and heart which animated it? But I was blind—infatuated—obstinate—weak!—and I rejected him, to wed his opposite. On my marriage, he accepted a diplomatic mission, and went abroad; being unable, it was said, to stay in England after that event. However that might be, he returned to it again when I had been married about two years and a half; and I not only frequently met him in company, but my husband asked him continually to the house. Why he did so I cannot tell, except that it was in hopes I might give him an opportunity of reproaching me with being too attentive to an old admirer, and of charging me with impropriety of conduct. But he knew not the man whom he thus tried to lead into temptation, nor the woman whom he thus endeavoured to place in dangerous and difficult situations. My former lover refused all his invitations to our house, except when I opened my doors to all the world; and if a feeling of former attachment glowed within his bosom, he respected me too much to let it appear in his looks or manner; but he pitied me, deeply pitied me; for his eye soon discovered the real wretch, under the gay trifler in fashionable circles, and I saw that he beheld the increasing paleness of my sunk cheek under the bright tints which covered it.

"Nay, once he overheard some terrible invectives with which my husband assailed me, as he was leading me to my carriage, when he wanted me to set him down at the opera, and fancied I was unwilling to come away;—and never, never shall I forget the look of fruitless and tender compassion with which he regarded me! I see it yet; and whether my fancy gave

it the expression or not, I cannot decide, but it seemed to say, 'Deluded woman, what have you done? destroyed my happiness and your own too!'

"But this was the only moment when his eyes ever spoke to mine; and soon after he again left England as resident at a distant court; nor have I seen him since.

"I was now within two months of my confinement, and anxiously and earnestly anticipating the event; for I could not help hoping that, spite of his avowed aversion to children, the sight of his own might soften my husband's heart in favour of the mother.

"But my hopes were doomed to be disappointed.

"One morning my husband (who never suffered me to retain any part of my allowance, and kept me therefore as poor as he made himself) entered the inner drawing-room where I was sitting, to ask for whatever money I had about me;—but I had none to give him; and whether his demands were more pressing than usual, or what was the cause, I know not, but he flew into the most ungovernable passion—cursed the day he ever married me, cursed me for having had the weakness to love him, and to believe he loved me; assuring me that he merely married me for my money, and that he then loved, and still loved, another woman.

"Bitter, overwhelming as this moment was, which added the pangs of jealousy to the consciousness of never having been loved by the man I doted on, it was but the forerunner of suffering different in its nature, but as agonizing in degree; (if any pang can equal that inflicted by jealousy;) for, on looking up with a sort of desperate fixedness to the livid and distorted face of my husband—immovable, and as if transfixed with horror, I beheld my father!!! and saw that the misery which I had hitherto so carefully concealed from him, was now revealed to him in all its terrible extent!

"The sight of his despair and the consciousness of his pangs drew from me what my own had failed to do—a scream of frenzied agony, which caused my husband to turn round, and to behold that unhappy parent whom he had thus stabbed, though unconsciously, to the heart. Instantly, conscience-stricken, he started, hid his face in his hands, and precipitately left the room.

"I cannot dwell on the sad scene which succeeded between my broken-hearted parent and myself; suffice, that when I threw myself into his arms, as if for protection and for comfort, I ceased to feel as wretched as I had done before, and for a while my consciousness of suffering abated. I must own too, that at the time, a feeling of selfishness prevailed; and I was not sorry to be no longer obliged to keep within my own bosom the secret of my sorrows, but was relieved by being able to confide them to the only being on earth of whose affection I could not be deprived, and whose sympathy and pity for my distress could never know abatement. If there can be a joy in misery, it was mine at that moment.

"My father was the first to break silence; and it was in such a voice, and with such a look as showed me what he was about to utter; and nearly inarticulate with agony, I exclaimed, 'Oh! do not, do not curse him!'

"What my poor father would have replied I know not; but at this moment he saw my pale face assume a still more ghastly hue; and as he caught me in his arms, to save me from falling, he hastily rang the bell for assistance.

"I was instantly conscious of the effect of my late agitation, and that a premature confinement would be the unfortunate result. Nor was I deceived in my forebodings; and for many hours my life hung suspended as it were on a thread. In the intervals of my suffering I was continually asking for my father, and his presence always seemed to cheer me; but I never asked for my husband; and I found on my recovery, jealous as he was of appearing to be a beloved and loving husband, that he deeply resented this natural result of outraged feeling and resented cruelty.

"At length the little victim, probably, of a father's brutality, opened its eyes on the light to close them again for ever; and I was consoled by the certainty that no father's blessing would have hailed him to existence.

"As soon as my life was safe, my father told me he must return home; nor did I wonder at his being eager to go, as the sight of my husband was, I saw, become odious to him, though he seemed to feel the greatest possible anxiety during my danger; and well he might; for he knew that his expectations of further wealth must die with me; and I fear that my father put this interpretation on his agonies. But perhaps we judged him uncandidly, and remorse as well as interest might prompt the evident agitation. My father wished me to accompany him into the country; but I was pronounced too weak to undertake the journey; and as I saw how ill he was able to endure my husband's presence, and was fearful of some terrible scene between them, I forbore to ask him to defer his departure till I was strong enough to go with him. However, unasked, as my husband declared his intention of leaving town, he stayed a few days longer; and these were the last days of affectionate enjoyment that I ever knew. During that period I endeavoured to excuse in my husband the cruel declaration, and those overwhelming curses which my father overheard, and I assured him, (which was the truth,) I had been so unwell that day and the preceding one, that the event which we deplored might have taken place had Seymour been less unkind. I also tried to persuade him that I had occasionally hours of happiness, and did not repent my ill-starred union; and it was so

necessary to his peace that he should believe me, that he did so.

"How sweet it was to me to live once more in uninterrupted intercourse with a being who really loved me, who spoke to me always in the tone of affection, and looked on me with eyes of fondness! But the hours flew too rapidly away; and the moment of my husband's return, which was the signal for my father's departure, came on me as an unexpected calamity. And what grief of heart it was for me to think, that the return of *her husband* should drive a father away from an *only child!*

"But it could not be otherwise, and I had only to submit in silence and resignation; but O that parting! O the agony of that moment, when my father on his knees commended me, with quivering lips and streaming eyes, to the protection and support of my Creator, in the trials to which he was certain that he left me, and then rushed out of the house! The misery of our parting then, could only be exceeded by that of our next meeting.

"When he was gone, I fell into a sort of stupid acquiescence in my fate. I welcomed my husband, who was really kind when we first met, with a smile of tranquillity, approaching to imbecility, which evidently shocked him; and he pressed my pale lip with a degree of affection to which I had long been a stranger.

"I was soon, however, too fatally roused to the keenest sense of suffering. My father was advancing in life, and the agitation and anxiety which he had recently undergone had a pernicious, nay fatal effect on his frame; for he had not been home above three days when he was seized with a paralytic stroke. An express was immediately sent off to my husband, who, to do him justice, broke the intelligence in the gentlest manner to me, and, foreseeing that I should wish to set off directly, had ordered horses to the door before he communicated it; he also insisted on accompanying me, meaning to keep his arrival a secret from my father.

"This kindness, this attention, whatever were its motives, supported me wonderfully under this new and severest of trials; and if I found my poor father sensible, I meant to please him by relating it to him. But alas! when my husband, who left the carriage to ask how my father was, even before he handed me out, returned to me as I leaned in almost breathless agitation against the door of the hall, I saw such an expression of satisfaction on his features as led me to imagine he brought good news; and when he told me on the contrary that I must prepare myself for the worst, I could not but feel, even at that engrossing moment, that the certainty of my father's fate had occasioned the glad expression which I had observed.

"I therefore rejected involuntarily his offered arm up the stairs, and staggered alone into the chamber of death. Though the last struggles of life were fast approaching, and the powers of utterance were nearly destroyed, the sufferer's perceptions were clear; and instantly recognizing me, he held out his hand in welcome; while his dying eyes were turned with unutterable tenderness upon me. I threw myself in an agony of grief beside him; and seeing, by a mournful shake of his head, that he meant to assure me there was no hope of his recovery, I gave way to the tenderness of lamentation, conjuring him to live for my sake, or *take me with him!* These words too plainly spoke that I was conscious, if I lost him, I should lose every thing which endeared life to me; and as he tried to embrace me with the arm that had escaped the attack, he said in imperfect accents, and looking up to heaven, 'There! seek there a father, my child, — bless ——' and while I hung over him in breathless attention to catch the imperfect and unfinished sentences, he looked wistfully in my face, the arm that grasped me suddenly let go its hold, and his eyes closed to open no more. I must pause—this recollection always overwhelms me.

"Day succeeded to day, and week to week, yet I showed no signs, I have been told, of returning consciousness; and except that I breathed, it was sometimes doubtful whether I existed. At length, however, my youth enabled me to triumph over my disease, — the result of the debility occasioned by sorrow and emotions of a various nature,—and I recovered to a sense of what now was. But such a dreadful consciousness attended returning recollection, that I wished in the first feelings of despair, to lose again the sense so lately restored to me; for I seemed to stand alone in the world, unloved, unsoothed, and unsupported!

"The eyes which had regarded me with partial affection during so many years were now closed in the grave; the only heart that loved me with a tenderness which *nothing could chill*, was now still and cold and broken; —and broken by whom? and whose persevering and unduteous obstinacy had led to consequences so fatal and distressing? And yet I live, and still must live! live to suffer—retributive justice wills that I should — and drink to the dregs that bitter cup which I have drugged for myself! Such were my thoughts on recovering my recollection. But fortunately for me, so deep was my contrition, for having been the means of my father's sudden fate, so prostrate was I in true humiliation and self-judgment before the Being who had thus made my offence the means of my punishment, — that I gathered consolation from the excess of my misery, and was thankful that I was allowed to endeavour to expiate by trial the sins which I had committed; and this feeling saved and supported me.

"My husband expressed great joy at my recovery, and was, I have been informed, excessively afflicted at beholding my sad state; (no wonder; for had he not, as it were, two lives to answer for already, and might not mine be added to the list?) And when his tears fell on my neck, as he pressed me to his heart on first seeing restored recollection in my eyes, when I opened them on the objects around me, and shudderingly recognised him, my heart reproached me for being so shut up, as it were, against these evidences of his affection; and as I leaned against his bosom, I resolved to endeavour, *if possible, to love him still*, and try to be the object of his love.

"I *did* love him still, spite of all that had passed; and when he devoted his hours, as he now did, to endeavour to amuse and cheer me, I forgot his past cruelty, and only wished my beloved father was alive to witness the happy change. But with my health and recovered calmness, my husband's attentions ceased; and I was left alone again to brood over my sorrows; while superior to the rest towered the pang of jealousy, and his declaration that *he had never loved me, but had loved and still loved another*, haunted me wherever I went. And who and where could this rival be? But perhaps he had only said this to torment me. However, the idea, false or true, was always uppermost; and whenever we were at an assembly together, I always watched his countenance when he addressed the young, and beautiful, and the attractive.

"You will wonder, perhaps, to hear me talk of going to assemblies again; but it was part of my duty to do it.

"As the terrible illness which had succeeded my poor father's death, was a sufficient proof of the love I bore him, and months of suffering and seclusion had testified my respect for his memory, my next duty was to indulge my husband's wishes;—besides, such, as I said before, was his jealousy with regard to his reputation on certain points, that he was afraid the world should suspect I secluded myself to weep on account of a living husband rather than a dead father. His self-love too was wounded at the idea, that such grief for a parent could be felt by one who was so happy as to call him husband; and he insisted on my putting off mourning, and putting on rouge, and on my resuming my usual habits of visiting.

"I obeyed, and even tried to be gay;—and it was curious to observe what a contrast to me his manner in society was to his manner at home.

"In company he was still so attentive to me, and so kind, that he flattered himself I should be the envy of wives and of women;—but the moment he had me to himself again, the mask was thrown off, and the domestic tyrant again appeared. He reminded me of the fairy tale, in which the hero was forced by some powerful enchanter to appear in the most beauuful form possible all day, and to change into some sort of monster every night—and the powerful enchanter in this case was *Temper*.

"While I was enduring what this capricious magician inflicted on me, I used to say to myself 'Yes—yes—he spoke the truth. He does not love me, he never did love me, and he loves another;' for that was the mournful burthen of my song. Yet still, I saw no being apparently preferred to me; nor did the expressive glance of his brilliant eye ever seem to turn on any woman with the tell-tale softness of love.

"However, he was frequently out all day and all night, and there seemed no end to his extravagance and his expenses. When I was able to attend to business, I found—what I had been apprehensive might not be the case—that my father did not alter his will after his last visit to London; but that the legacy to my husband stood as it did before; and this legacy was no less a sum than several thousand pounds.

"The money which he bequeathed to me was so tied up, that I, and I alone, could receive the interest of it. But I had the fee of a considerable sum; and except that my husband did not like to be obliged to ask me to give him such parts of my income as his necessities demanded, I had reason to think he was well satisfied with the will, especially as his bequest was more than he had ever expected.

"Yet that money was all gone, I knew, soon after it was received; and I began to fear that gaming was the vortex which swallowed up his wealth. I indeed had long been the only person who was a stranger to his love of play and his general profligacy of life. But how could I be otherwise? No one can presume to tell a wife who respects herself and her duties, of the errors of her husband; nor can such a one ever listen for a moment to the offensive tale, even should any one be bold enough to enter upon it; therefore I seemed likely to remain for ever a stranger to my husband's immoralities, or only to guess at them by their ruinous effects. Yet, with the usual suspicion that marked his character, he was so afraid that I might be told tales of his conduct, and indulge a weak and unprincipled curiosity in listening to and seeking them, that he insisted on my gradually dropping my early and intimate friends, on pretence that he was jealous of my loving any one besides himself.

"Another instance of the tyranny which he exercised, and the obedience which he exacted, he gave by desiring me to leave off singing, as he disliked music generally, and my performances particularly, vowing that, when he was sometimes disposed to return home, the dread of hearing my infernal squalling kept him away; besides he said he thought I

sung too well for a gentlewoman, and that as I did not please, by the display of that accomplishment, the only man whom I ought to wish to please, it was my duty to give it up. This was a hard trial of my obedience indeed; but I obeyed.—O Mrs. Derville! how I envied you when you told me that Mr. Derville delighted to hear you sing! Do you not remember what I said to you at that moment?

"About this time an important event in my life took place. My mother had an uncle not many years older than herself, who was excessively attached both to her and to my father. He had been my father's school-fellow, and just before they married he went out to India with a very lucrative appointment.

"When he arrived there, he wrote word that it was his earnest desire that one of my mother's children, if she had any, should be christened after him. His name was Louis; and if it were a boy to be so called, and if a girl, Louisa. I was the third born. I was therefore called Louisa, and a friend of his stood proxy at the font for Mr. Arlington.

"During the first years of his residence in India, he used to write constantly to my parents; but he had not written for many years, when, as I was one day sitting mournfully in my own apartment, I was told that a gentleman of the name of Arlington wished to see me. It instantly occurred to me that it might be my mother's uncle, and I hastened to him with almost trembling eagerness. I was not deceived; and for a while he mingled his tears with mine, at the remembrance of my beloved parents.

"I felt his arrival an alleviation of my domestic sufferings; for I had found a heart to sympathize with me in all my regrets for those whom I had lost.

"The only drawback to my pleasure in the society of this truly affectionate relation and admirable man, was, the terror I experienced lest he should discover that my unhappiness (which I could not always hide) was occasioned by the living more than by the dead. But this task was made comparatively easy to me by the conduct of my husband, who, finding that my uncle was a man of immense property, an old bachelor, and my godfather,—determined by every attention in his power to conciliate his favour, in order to induce him, when he died, to leave me his wealth without any of the restrictions with which my father had encumbered his property. And finding that Mr. Arlington was very fond of singing, he repealed the prohibition mentioned above; and I had not only the satisfaction of gratifying myself by resuming the exercise of a talent which I enjoyed, but the far greater delight of obliging a relation whom I really had learned to love.

"Mr. Arlington was now so much with us at meals, and I so rarely saw my husband at any other time, that if my life was not happy, it was at least tranquil. And my greatest trial now was, finding my means to relieve the wants of others,—a duty which I had been educated strictly to perform,—exhausted only too constantly by my husband's demands on my purse; and when I told him such and such sums were appropriated to certain purposes, there was no language strong enough to express his contempt for what he called *alms-giving;* and he used to bid me recollect that there were *poor-laws*, and they were quite sufficient for the relief of my amiable *protégés.*

"Twice, at moments like these, Mr. Arlington was announced. And while my untutored countenance betrayed but too well what was passing in my mind, my husband was able to recover himself directly—to receive his guest with the most conciliating smile—and when he saw that the old man examined my looks, he coolly accounted for my discomposure by observing, that if he had not some prudence, my amiable but indiscriminating charities would ruin us both; and that he had just been unwillingly convincing me that the seeming poor were often as rich as those of whom they begged.

"But though it was possible that this tale might impose on Mr. Arlington twice, it was not likely to do so a third time; and I saw the look of disdainful suspicion with which he regarded my husband.

"Both times, however, he chose to seem to be deceived; and when we were alone he asked me—reminding me that I was not only his niece but his god-daughter,—if the contents of his purse would give me any satisfaction; and I frankly owned that it would.

"For at least a twelvemonth I enjoyed the comfort of this amiable being's society, with the approbation of my husband, who was invariable in his attentions to him; but I was only too sure that Mr. Arlington understood the extent of my wedded trial, and was even far more aware of it, I afterwards found, than I was; for communications were made to him which could not meet my ear; and though, in order to avoid giving me pain, he behaved with great politeness to Mr. Seymour, it was evident even to me that the feelings which he entertained towards him were not those of esteem.

"It was during this twelvemonth that Mr. Arlington bought the Lawn-house and the estates round it, and added to it the baths, the theatre, the pineries, the succession-houses, and all the luxuries which you have seen, admired, and *envied.* Will you ever envy me again?

"This good old man was become inexpressibly dear to me, and he was useful also; for I found him a sufficient *chaperon* if I went to the opera or a party, and I needed no other beau to see for my carriage and attend me through the crowd. I was therefore set free from the necessity of accepting the services of idle men

of fashion, who would gladly have been the *cavaliere servante* of a wife whose husband was supposed to ill-treat her; and who, however changed by sorrow, was once deemed an object of admiration.

"Lord N.—(your friend, Jane)—was at this time very desirous of being my obsequious follower; but he soon found that his powers of pleasing were thrown away on a woman who thought his flatteries degraded rather than honoured her; and he wisely ceased to try to make me talked of, and himself—in that way at least.

"But the chief benefit which I derived from Mr. Arlington's return to England was, that he took from me the feeling of forlornness—that most cruel and most painful nearly of all feelings, the pangs of self-reproach excepted. For when my father died, and I believed that my husband loved me not,—when I saw my early friends separated from me, and knew that the man who had loved me, and who probably still was interested in my fate, was resident in a foreign land,—I seemed to myself to stand alone in creation! Wealth seemed a mockery; acquaintances only uninteresting baubles; public spectacles nauseous frivolities; talents empty distinctions; and I was like one who tried to slake his thirst in a garden filled only with fruits of gold and water of quicksilver.

"The affections of my heart were withering; their object had proved unworthy, and gave me scorn and cruelty for love; and I wandered about like a St. Leon in the tale, without one feeling of sympathy with the contemporaries around me.

"But Mr. Arlington came, and my heart reopened to the pleasure of loving and being beloved. With him I could converse of all I had ever held dear; to his amusement, nay to his happiness, I had the certainty of being instrumental, and I might say of being necessary; and while I felt this, I was enabled to endure the trials of my situation with tranquil resignation. The feeling of jealousy indeed rankled still; but as it had no object to fix on, its bitterness gradually faded away; and the more surely, because my husband's increasing infirmities of temper had the certain consequence of weakening my affection by imperceptible and slow, but certain degrees.

"But a new misfortune was reserved for me in the death of this beloved uncle; and a complaint in the heart carried him off in one unconscious moment.

"He died at the Lawn-house; and my husband went down thither to attend the funeral and be present at the reading of the will. But he hoped that no will would be found, as in that case Lawn-house and all the property would be his, to do what he pleased with, since I was Mr. Arlington's heir at law. But he was mistaken in his hopes;—a will was found, and read to his utter confusion and disappointment; for it was so worded, under the direction of the ablest lawyers, that all Mr. Arlington's landed and personal property became mine on his death—solely on these conditions, namely: that I expended not one farthing of my property on my husband (while that husband was Sedley Seymour) in any way whatever. I was forbidden to make him even a present, and on no pretence was he to interfere with my expenditure. If I was guilty of this infraction of his will, and the fact could be proved against me, the estates were to go to his next heir at law, whoever that might be; and the personal property to the person who substantiated the charge.—Kind, considerate, but *injudicious* benefactor!

"The posthumous resentment of my injuries declared only too powerfully to every one that such injuries existed; and by wounding my husband's self-love, as well as by disappointing his hopes, it only served to widen the breach between us. Never shall I forget, never will I attempt to describe, the scene that awaited me on his return.

"I was now the mistress of immense wealth, over the disposal of which I had unlimited control; and so far I enjoyed the prospects it held out to me; but still, it was less precious to my own selfish gratifications than the society of the donor; and, though my husband reproached me with hypocrisy, I deeply mourned the loss of my uncle.

"But I must own that I felt pain at not being able to spend any part of my fortune as my heart would have dictated,—namely, on my offending, yet still dear husband,—though this he swore never to believe; and sometimes, to tease me, he said he was sure that I dictated the will myself; but this I knew he did not think, and all I could do I did. I bought fine horses and carriages; I gave expensive dinners; of the former he had the free use, and to the latter he invited whomsoever he chose; and when the Lawn-house was ready, I invited thither all those whose society was most pleasing to him; nay, I did still more; the trustees of my marriage settlement had hitherto very properly refused to give up any part of the trust to accommodate Mr. Seymour's necessities, though I had urged them to it. But now, on his assuring me that a certain sum would make him easy and save him from arrest, I prevailed on them to give it up, as it was very certain I had much more now than I could ever want, and secured in such a manner that it could not be squandered except by my own extravagance.

"They were convinced, and yielded to my wishes; but I would not, for his own sake, let him have at one time more money than his absolute necessities required.

"My story, I am happy to say, is now drawing to a conclusion, and I have only one more incident to relate.

"I was walking one morning with a servant behind me, on a shopping expedition to

a linen-draper's whom I always employed; but seeing that a shower of rain was coming on, I went into a shop which I was passing, and resolved to buy what I wanted there.

"In the shop was a young lady, attended by a nurse and child, who was so young and so beautiful, and so every way attractive in appearance, that I gazed on her with wonder and admiration. And when desired to say what I wanted, I sat down in a chair, and said I would wait till that lady was served, (for indeed I wished for leisure to gaze on her at my ease.) This produced from her a sweet smile and a courteous bow of the head; and then turning round, she caressed the child, who appeared about two years old; and I found to my surprise that it was her own, for she did not look more than seventeen. 'It is a sweet boy,' said I.

"'It is mine,' said she smiling.

"'But not at all like you, though it is very handsome.'

"'He is the image of his father,' she replied; and went on with her purchase.

"I meanwhile was playing with the little boy, and attracting him to me by the gold chain and other ornaments which I wore; and as he looked up in my face, I wondered who the father could be whom he so much resembled, for the eyes seemed familiar to me.

"The rain was now falling in torrents; I therefore sent my servant for my carriage; and the lady having completed her purchases, desired them to be sent to her house. 'What name, madam?' asked the shopman, while I listened attentively. 'Mrs. Sedley Seymour,' she replied; and some number, and some street; but I heard no more. A sad suspicion came over my mind; I thought I had at last discovered my rival, and discovered her bearing my name as well as enjoying my rights.

"The shopman saw that I turned very pale; and fearing I was going to faint, the woman serving behind the counter led me into an inner room in which there was a sofa; while the unconscious usurper of my name gave them a bottle of salts for my use. But summoning all my energy to my aid, I conquered the weakness; and though I threw myself on the sofa I did not faint, but lay revolving in my mind every possible reason for believing that there might be another Sedley Seymour, though the name was peculiar, and I had often heard my husband say he believed there was no one living of the same name as himself;—still he might be mistaken; and it was impossible for me to believe that the fair, young, and innocent-looking mother before me, was not as innocent as she seemed.

"'But I will sift this matter to the bottom,' thought I. Yet the next moment I doubted whether I should be justified in thus surprising my husband's secrets, supposing that my fears were just. A feeling, however, which carried all else before it, urged me to make every discovery possible; and being quite recovered, I returned into the shop. The unconscious cause of my illness met me, and inquired concerning my health with the kindest accents. This and the sight of the child, who now appeared to me the image of Mr. Seymour, nearly overcame me again. My carriage had by this time arrived; and having made up my mind how to act, I offered (as the rain still continued) to set the fair stranger down. But she refused, on pretence of trouble, crowding, my illness, &c., as I knew she would. I was however determined to carry my point, and I did carry it.—She lived at the top of Upper Baker-street; and as soon as we were in the coach I tried to summon up resolution to ask certain necessary questions, as, 'Is that your oldest child?'—'O yes, I have not been married three years.'

"'Married!' I repeated to myself; and my hopes revived. 'I should not think,' replied I, 'by your look, that you could have been married so long.'

"'O yes, and engaged much longer; for I was engaged before I was fifteen, and should have been married then, but my husband, who was recuiting in Wales, where I lived, was only a lieutenant of dragoons, and had no money, and I had none then.'

"'In what regiment was your husband?' And she named Mr. Seymour's.

"I had her salts still in my hand; and it is well I had, for they saved me from nearly fainting again.

"'It is hard,' said I, 'when poverty prevents two persons, who love each other, from marrying.'

"'It is indeed,' she answered. 'But luckily, three years ago, just after my father died and my brother went to India, I had a handsome fortune left me; so I wrote to my lover, and he came down and married me. I assure you I was very glad to see him, for I had seen in the newspaper the marriage of Sedley Seymour, Esq., to a Miss Fortescue, and I was afraid it was he.'

"'Indeed!' cried I, feeling my head turn round.

"'Yes, and I said so in my letter; but he told me when he came down that it was an uncle of his, who had married a great beauty and a great heiress.'

"O how little could she have been able to discover the *great beauty* in the poor, pale, meagre, trembling being before her! How I kept my senses I know not; but I did keep them, though I could doubt the horrid truth no longer.

"Yet I have thought that two convictions supported me, and assuaged my misery;—the one was, that perhaps the want of a certain sum of money, as much, or even more than love, prompted Seymour to marry this unhappy girl, who had, by writing to him, thrown the temptation in his way;—the other was, that

he had not seduced her, and that she was still in the sight of Heaven, and indeed of man, as innocent as if she had never seen him.

"Yes—great as was his guilt towards her and towards me, I felt a degree of consolation in this last thought, which worlds would not have bought of me.

"As soon as I had learned from her all I wanted to know,—and her voluble simplicity made my task so far easy,—I complained of being ill, (which indeed was really the case,) as an excuse for sinking into total silence, that I might decide how it became me to act on this most trying occasion of my life;—for what can equal the agony of finding that the object on whom you have doted is utterly despicable, utterly unworthy of your love?

"Sometimes it appeared to me that I should do a cruel action in withdrawing the veil that hid this poor woman's real situation from her; for while she believed herself a wife, she was innocent; but then, if I did not enlighten her on this subject, I was conniving at my husband's continuing to live in the commission of crime. And now she was an innocent woman only; if, when told the truth, she instantly resolved to leave him, then she would become a virtuous one, and this it was my duty to give her an opportunity of being. But when I recollected that I must cloud over that fair and open brow with conscious shame, my heart died within me; and I felt this the hardest task and the severest trial which the vices of my husband had been the means of imposing upon me.

"At length we reached her house; and finding me still very ill, she asked me to alight, a civility which I expected, and which I had determined to accept. Let me own my weakness. Since I knew who the father was, the sight of the child who sat opposite to me was nearly insupportable to me, by recalling a number of overwhelming recollections, and I frequently closed my eyes that I might shut out *him*.

"While the poor innocent, unconscious of the blow that awaited her, was gone to procure me some lavender drops, I looked round the room which was neatly, not gayly furnished; and the first thing that met my view was a picture of Mr. Seymour. It was so like him, so like him with his best expression, that I resolved not to look at it again, as I wished to recollect him only as his mind and temper made him appear in my presence, and I turned to other objects. The poor Emily (for that was her name) now re-entered the room. I took the drops, and she seated herself beside me.

"'Our house is small,' said she, 'but we keep no company; my husband's connexions and family are superior to his fortune; and as he could not afford to give entertainments in return, he does not introduce me to any one, but neither owns nor conceals his marriage; and so as I do but see him, I am happy. But, alas! I see very little of him; he has a place which takes up much of his time, and he has also an old uncle out of town, to whom he is forced to pay constant attention; so that he seldom spends more than two whole days in a week with me, and those are Saturday and Sunday.' I instantly remembered that he always told me he went into the country on those days to the house of Lord N. To what falsehoods and what base acts was he thus continually forced to have recourse, to deceive and satisfy even this unsuspecting creature! How my heart bled for her, while I almost execrated her destroyer! And who was he? Dread thought! he was my husband! Yet, amidst all her wrongs, I was not sure that a lurking weakness in my heart did not make me envy her; for he loved her—always had loved her; and she probably was a stranger to those dreadful proofs of uncontrolled temper which had made my life wretched;—*Had* made—for *at that moment* I resolved never to live with him again, but abandon him to the narrow income, which his crimes deserved.

"The morning was now wearing away, and yet I wanted courage to perform the dreadful office that awaited me. But in silence, and in sadness, and in deep humility of spirit, I lifted up my heart to Him who could alone support and guide me; and when I again took my hand from my face, it was with a determination to go through my duty immediately. 'See, that is my husband's picture;' said the poor Emily; giving it into my hand (for it was a miniature) with pride and pleasure.

"'I see it is Mr. Seymour's picture,' I coldly replied.

"'What! did you then ever see him?'

"'Yes, I have seen him; and I regret the hour when I first saw him;—but still more for your sake, dear unconscious victim, do I regret the hour when *you* first saw him; and I, alas! must teach you to regret it also.'

"I believe the poor thing thought me insane; and alarming as that fear was, it was comfort to the feelings which succeeded it.

"She still held the picture. I took it from her; I looked at it, and burst into an agony of tears. They did me good, and I was soon able to proceed. 'You told me this was the picture of *your husband*. I replied, 'I see it is the picture of Mr. Seymour.'—Did you not mark something evasive in my reply?'

"A *no* faltered on her lips; she was too much agitated to speak plainly.

"'I meant, dear deluded INNOCENT,—for such you are, and remember it to your consolation,—that it was the picture of Mr. Seymour, not of *your husband*; for he is *mine*—*my* husband. I was the Miss Fortescue whom Sedley Seymour married; and he has no uncle.'

"I cannot describe the expression of her countenance when I said this! She fixed her

eyes on me with a wild stare, and then with a sort of mad laugh exclaimed, 'No, no—no—no—that's impossible!'

"'Well it were,' replied I, in emotion nearly equal to her own; 'but you know his hand-writing, therefore read this and be convinced.'—So saying, I put the following note into her hand, which I happened to have in my pocket, showing her the address first.

"'I shall not dine at home to-day, Louisa; but I mean to attend your assembly this evening with Lord and Lady Nelvin.'

"She read—she heaved a few hysterical sobs, and I received her senseless in my arms.

"The suspension, the happy suspension of life as I may call it, was only temporary; and never shall I forget the look of woe with which she opened her eyes and gazed on me! Then, hiding her face, she fell at my feet, and embracing my knees, begged me to forgive her.

"'Forgive thee! my poor child,' said I, tenderly embracing her; 'what pardon hast thou to ask? Unconsciously thou hast invaded my rights; and I repeat—Remember, you are INNOCENT; and if you are capable of being VIRTUOUS also, I will be your friend, your mother, and a mother to your infant; I have the *means*, and I have the *will*, to *save* and to *protect* you!'

"'Then I must leave him—never see him more, I suppose!' she cried with a scream of frenzy; and a long and terrible paroxysm succeeded.

"Painful would it have been to me to witness such a one at any time, and in any human being—but to think that my husband occasioned it—rendered me nearly wild myself.

"Not to be tedious, let me add that, when she became composed, I again told her that if she continued to live with Seymour after what she had heard, she would cease to be innocent, and would deserve to forfeit mine and every one's respect; but that, if she had resolution to leave her betrayer she would then be virtuous,—and so virtuous, that every one who knew her story would delight to praise her and to befriend her.

"She owned the truth of all I said, but doubted her resolution; and at length she conjured me to take her and her child away directly, and hide them from Seymour for ever; for if she saw him again, she was sure she should not have the heart to leave him.

"How I felt for this child of unaffected nature! How tender were the tears I shed over her! I forgot she was my rival, and I believe she forgot that I was hers; or rather that while I lived she could not be a wife; she seemed to remember nothing of me but that she had injured me, and that I forgave her.

"Her proposal, if feasible, I was desirous to comply with; and was considering whither I could take her, when we heard a hasty step on the stairs—and Seymour burst into the room. On seeing him, Emily screamed, and hid her face in my bosom; while I, bold in innocence, and proud to be thus chosen as the protector of injured innocence, awaited his approach with a firm and unvarying countenance.

"He was seemingly awed a moment, and lost his usually undaunted air and manner.

"'So, madam,' he at length exclaimed, 'is this well done of you to keep spies upon my actions, and force yourself into a house that calls me master? Here, madam, at least, I am independent of a mean and treacherous wife, and I can rid myself of an object that is odious to me. Go, I command you, hence! on the obedience which you owe me, and which you pretend to pay.'

"'After what I know of you, Mr. Seymour,' replied I with a firm voice and look, though my tongue was parched with emotion, 'your presence, sir, is to me, as odious as mine has long been to you. Your brutal violence of temper I could bear,—for lately at least it has injured only myself; but your profligate destruction of this lovely innocent I cannot forgive—I cannot excuse.'

"'No!' exclaimed he, 'cannot her excelling beauty excuse it? Look on her, madam. In what is she not your superior, except in fortune? And *she* does not make the wills of doting old men, to render the man whom she pretends to love a dependant on her caprice. Yes, madam, in every thing but fortune she is your superior—in youth, in beauty, in goodness of heart;—and she is as free from stain as you are; ay, and but for you she would have continued happy, for she loves me, and I dote on her; yes, but for you we had been happy still. Hark ye, madam, as some reparation for the cursed trick which you have now played me, do me one favour.'

"'Name it.'

"'Die, madam—die!' he exclaimed with frantic earnestness, and the look of a demon; 'Die! that I may make that angel amends for all she is now suffering, by making her legally my wife.'

"I thought I had already gone through the worst of my sufferings; but to hear the being for whom I had sacrificed so much, and suffered so much, desire me, as the only favour I could do him, to die, that he might marry another—nearly drove me to a desperation equal to his own; and even the woe-worn Emily exclaimed, 'Shame! shame on you, Seymour!'

"'I will save you, sir,' said I after a long struggle with myself, and speaking with effort, 'I will save you from the further guilt of ruffian treatment like this; I leave it to that lady to explain why I am here, and how. Sir, while enumerating the advantages which that much-injured being has over me, you omitted

the greatest in my eyes—that she is *not your wife*.'

"So saying, I left the room; and Seymour, who had never seen me show any thing like spirit before, seemed confounded at this exertion of it; and I went unimpeded to my carriage. But when I reached home, the servants found me in a swoon at the bottom of the coach; nor was I able to leave my bed for two days. Seymour did not come home during the time, and I was very anxious to know whether that time was passed with Emily.

"At the end of the third day he returned, and burst into my room like a man devoid of reason. 'Where have you hidden her? Whither have you taken Emily and my child?' he cried. 'Give them back to me, or take the consequences!' And as he said this he grasped my arm till I shrieked aloud with agony.

"'Has she then left you?—Noble girl!' I exclaimed in a transport of joy.

"'You know she has, accursed hypocrite!—and tell me where she is this moment.'

"'You know me to be no hypocrite,' I replied, 'and that neither my woe nor my joy is ever feigned. If she has left your protection I rejoice, and I honour her; and all I regret is, that she has *not fled to me*.'

"'Am I to believe then,' said he, turning very pale, 'that she has left me, and has not flown to you?—Then am I more wretched than before,—for what, O what, can have become of her?'

"'What, indeed!' repeated I. And Seymour, assured by my manner that I was as much alarmed as himself, left me with the same impetuosity as marked his entrance.

"The next morning by the two-penny post I received a note in a hand which I did not know. I opened it, and found with delight that it was signed 'Emily.'

"It was dated from an obscure lodging in the Borough, and it claimed the protection for her and her child which I had promised her.

"My resolution was instantly taken, and my plan laid. I ordered a post-chaise to meet me on Blackfriars-bridge, whither I drove in my own coach, taking my own maid with me. There I dismissed it, and got into the chaise, desiring it to drive me to Flint's on Fish-street-hill. When there, I ordered the chaise to Emily's lodgings. As soon as she saw me, she threw herself into my arms.

"'You and virtue have conquered,' said she; 'but oh! I have suffered much. While he remained with me after you left us, I thought I could never leave him; and I promised not to forsake him, though it was become wicked in me to live with him now; and on the strength of my assurances he went into the country to some races. But better feelings gained ascendency over me; and before he returned I was gone.—And now *do take me* where I shall never see him again!'

"I told her I was come for that purpose. And I took her and her child to a retired and pleasant seat of mine, which I inherited from Mr. Arlington, about ten miles from Lovelands; but so secluded that no one going along the high-road could imagine there was a house near. And there, on pretence that she was a friend of mine in ill health, to whom change of air was necessary, I left her settled, as I hope, for life. Before we parted, I engaged servants to wait on her, and told her that I would allow her an income equal to her own fortune, which, I had no doubt, had been entirely wasted; and that I would settle a fortune on her child.

"In three days, having seen her tolerably composed, I went to the Lawn-house with a lightened heart; and thither I had ordered my carriage, in which I returned to London.

"'So madam,' said Seymour when he saw me, which was not till a week after my return, 'this is the way in which you virtuous wives behave, is it? You leave home unknown to your husband, and are absent for days without his knowing where you are!'

"'Under most circumstances such conduct would, I know, be wrong,' said I; 'but those I acted under were so imperious that I could not do otherwise than I have done; and remember, that I did not go alone;—I made a highly respected servant the witness of my conduct and the companion of my journey.—Have you heard of your Emily, sir?'

"'No; and I am very uneasy; have you?'

"'I have. She applied to me for protection after I last saw you; and I have protected her, and will protect her from you.'

"'Where is she?'

"'Did I not tell you I would protect her from you?—Then how can I tell you where she is?"

"'I will know.'

"'Never! from *me*.'

"I will not relate all that passed; but I thought I perceived, spite of his violence, that he was relieved of a burthen; and that provided he could but see her now and then, (and he hoped to find out her abode,) he was very glad to have her maintained by another.

"'And you have really undertaken to maintain her and the child?' said he; 'I hope you do it handsomely;—she is a gentlewoman, Louisa, and has had the education and the fortune of one.'

"'Handsomely! Do you doubt it?'

"'No, on my honour, I do not,' he replied with more feeling than I ever saw in him before; 'no, Louisa, no; I do you justice; and I believe that the allowance is far, far beyond what any one but yourself would think sufficient.'

"'In what I have done,' replied I, 'I have sought the approbation of my own conscience, and that is enough; but let me tell you, to put your heart entirely at rest, that if I die to-

morrow—' here my voice faltered, from recollection of his wishing me to die—' your child will have a sufficient fortune, and his mother will be no mean heiress to her husband.'

"The look he gave me at this moment is almost the only look of his which, since we married, I can recollect with pleasure. Tears filled his eyes, as he gazed on me mournfully, tenderly, and reverentially I may say;—then snatching my hand to his lips, he rushed out of the room.

"It was our last meeting!—I saw him no more!

"He went, I understand, that night to the gaming-table, and remained there till the second night; when having lost all that he played for, in an evil hour he used some gentleman's name improperly, in a money transaction, of which indeed I chose never to hear an explanation;—but it was, in some way or other, a dishonourable transaction, and he was forced to fly the country.

"Shocked as I was at the cause, I was rejoiced by the effect; we were now separated without any painful exertion of mine; I was at liberty to live for myself and the pursuits I loved; and was no longer hanging for joy, or grief, on the smiles or frowns of a tyrant. The first use I made of my liberty was to remove to the Lawn-house, and quit London entirely.

"All that I could do for my unhappy husband I did; and the income which I derived from the fortune my father left me, abroad as well as here, I no sooner received than I transmitted it to him.

"He often entreated me to relax in my rigour, and let him know where Emily resided, as he could not distress her now by his visits. But I knew he would try to prevail on her by letter to come over and cheer his exile, and I wished to preserve her from all temptation.

"She was, however, fortified against it, in a way I little expected;—she had a most religious and virtuous education, and it was her piety which enabled her to resist the pleadings of her heart.

"As soon as it was known that Seymour had left England, and that I was not to be the sharer of his exile,—a sacrifice which he even did not dare to ask of me, after my knowledge of his real character—Mr. Arlington's executor put a letter into my hand, which he was desired to give me, only in case I was ever separated from my husband.

"I was now separated from him, and the letter was, consequently, given me. Mr. Arlington's letter began by requiring that I should drop the name of Seymour, and assume that of Arlington; a requisition with which I was not sorry to comply. It went on to advise, that when I was placed in that situation, the most dangerous, as he said, to a young and beautiful woman, (and I was then only twenty-seven,) viz. separation from a profligate husband, I should retire from the world of London, and live at the Lawn-house, or at any other of my seats. That in order to make me amends for quitting London, he had tried to convert the Lawn-house into the abode of every means of amusement, and had therefore built a music room, a banqueting room, and a theatre, and had given me in perfection the eastern and Turkish luxury of baths according to the best model.

"He also begged, as he was fond of pomp and show, and had been accustomed to Indian splendour, that I would always keep up a state equal to my fortune, and becoming my relationship, on the paternal and maternal side, to two noble families; and he insisted that I should never go out without outriders and four horses, and that I should have a groom of the chamber, servants for the baths, and a set of rowers for my barge; in short, every thing in the highest style possible.

"I was glad to live at the Lawn-house; but it was painful to me to assume that state which he required of me; and I was sorry that he could suppose, as I conclude he did, that grandeur could make me amends for the want of domestic happiness. However, as you saw, I have obeyed him *à la lettre;* and in the recovered society of those early friends whom I neglected, to please my husband; and in the duties which my great wealth entailed on me; and in the cultivation of my mind, and the little talents I possess, I am become, compared to what I have been, happy.

"But never can I forget the deplorable error which I made in the choice of a husband; never forgive myself my determined preference of a man like Sedley Seymour.

"It was not only my perseverance in an attachment which my parents disapproved, that weighed heavily on my conscience; but it was my own want of a proper moral sense and of a virtuous delicacy in not feeling, when I heard from indisputable authority that Seymour was a man of immoral habits, that *purity* cannot have any sympathy with *impurity*, and that *innocence* ought to *shrink* from any intimate association with *vice*.

"Seymour might be belied, his faults might be exaggerated; but even he himself did not deny that his temper was bad and his conduct dissolute. Then how could a girl of moral habits and religious restraints think herself justified in entrusting the guardianship of her happiness to a man of a most detestable temper; and of her morals and her religion to a sceptical and notorious profligate!

"But my fault had brought its punishment along with it;—and while I admitted, I humbly and patiently bowed beneath this striking instance of retributive justice.

"Little now remains to be told, except that poor Emily, whom I frequently see here, or at her own house, has lost her child; an event which, under the circumstances of his birth, I

have tried to convince her, was not greatly to be deplored. She has engaged the affections of a worthy young man with a good fortune, in her neighbourhood, who knows her story, and whom she thinks, under other circumstances, she could like; but while Seymour lives she is resolved never to marry.

"And he does live, though in exile; lives too, I fear, in a way which virtue cannot approve; and which, therefore, keeps up constantly in me that pain of mind which I felt at first learning of his dreadful deviations from moral rectitude. But we have now been separated three years; and time, which insensibly has weakened my affection for him, gradually will weaken my sorrow for his sin.

"He sometimes writes to me, and now he rarely mentions Emily; but his last letter was written in such a tone of despondency, that if he wishes to see me, I intend to go over to him.

"Now, dear Mrs. Derville, can you wonder that I was wounded at your hesitating to return, for any empty pleasure which I could offer you, to such a husband as yours? Can you wonder that my eyes reproved you, when I also found that beloved husband expected you? And can you be surprised, when I tell you that I would exchange all my possessions, large as they are, for such a home as yours?

"From the indulgence of virtuous *affections*, and from them *alone*, can flow the happiness of life; and mine, all glowing as they are, have been thrown back upon my heart, to consume it with its own fires.

"Before I conclude, let me assure you, that though I wished, when I discovered certain feelings in you, to tell you the real situation of the woman whom you envied, and to show you the *dessous des cartes*, I could not prevail on myself to unveil my husband's faults so completely to any one, and I resolved to forbear. But when I beheld you afterwards as the preserver of my life, I felt it to be my duty to show my gratitude to you in the most effective way possible; and I humbly hope, that in my earnest endeavour to do my duty by you, I have not violated the duty which is owing even to an unworthy husband. But it is only under the seal of the strictest secresy that I give you this narrative; and when you have read it to your husband and your family, find some opportunity to return it to me again.

"Louisa Arlington."

It was not without many interruptions that Derville read this manuscript. Mrs. Derville was affected even to agony at some of the sufferings of her friend; and often was the narrative laid down, while Derville indulged himself in expressions of wonder that there could be such a husband—"and to such a woman," added his son. And when it was ended, Mrs. Derville wept long and uncontrolledly, not so much for Mrs. Arlington's unhappiness, as for the thankless unconsciousness of her own happiness, which she had herself displayed.

But in the midst of her self-upbraidings, she was consoled by the hope that her generous friend had not admonished in vain; that the remedy was efficacious, and the cure complete; and that if Mrs. Arlington owed her life to her, she was likely to owe a much greater obligation to Mrs. Arlington—the security of her domestic happiness.

"Well, Frederic," said Mrs. Derville, "and what do you think of Mrs. Arlington now?"

"Think of her? That she had better not come to Lovelands," he replied (wishing to hide a great deal of deeply awakened feeling under a little veil of pleasantry.)

"Better not come to Lovelands?" they all exclaimed. "Why not?"

"Lest I should fall in love with her; and then, perhaps, in humble imitation of her amiable husband, I should probably say to you, Anna, 'Die, madam, die! as the only favour you can now do me!' "

"Dear papa, I am sure you could not be so wicked!" cried Mary Ann.

"No, dear child, no; I trust I could not; and I was only joking; but it was a bad joke; and indeed I think the dreadful state of this wretched Mr. Seymour's mind and feelings, is not to be thought of with any feeling like pleasantry—but with sentiments of the deepest commiseration." And he went on to say, that though Mrs. Arlington did not express much on the subject, he was convinced that she felt a great deal; and he earnestly hoped that before Mr. Seymour died, and his life would probably not be long, his wife might have the satisfaction of knowing that he repented of his sins.

"O dear papa, if he could but hear you preach!" cried Mary Ann, "and preach that sermon 'on calling sinners to repentance!' "

Derville could not help smiling at Mary Ann's high idea of his powers as a preacher; and her observation certainly did not lessen the fervour of her mother's kiss, as she desired her to go to bed directly, for it was past eleven o'clock.

"Past eleven o'clock, mamma, and I still up! What will Mrs. Arlington say when she hears it?" Then, with her little heart full of pity for Mrs. Arlington's trials, and of self-importance to think she had a secret entrusted to her which she must impart to no one, Mary Ann went to her chamber for the first time in her life in a slow foot's pace.

Sally was surprised, and asked if she was unwell; but Mary Ann consequentially replied, "No—only thoughtful;" and as she saw she had excited Sally's curiosity, she was good-naturedly sorry that she could not impart to her usual confidant all the interesting things she had heard.

The next day they all wrote to Mrs. Arling-

ton; but Mrs. Derville's letter was blotted with many *precious tears*, as her kind monitor thought them.

That evening brought a hamper from London directed for Mrs. Derville, containing a breakfast-set, and a duplicate of every convenience for the table and in the breakfast-room, which Mrs. Derville had admired at the Lawn-house; and with it came the following letter from Mrs. Arlington, dated

"London.

"When you receive the memorial of your absent friend, which this accompanies, I shall be on my road to my poor husband. He has had a fit; and I am informed by a friend on whom I can depend, that he is in a declining state, and has removed from the neighbourhood of Paris to Boulogne, for the benefit of the sea air. He adds also that he is living there in poor lodgings, and has not good attendance. You will suppose therefore that I have not hesitated one moment to set off for Boulogne. I shall take a house, and give the invalid an invitation to remove to it if he choses. Farewell! All good attend you!

"Your kind letters beguiled me of no unpleasing tears; you all felt and wrote as I knew you would, and wished you should, feel and write; and I wear in 'my heart's core' dear Mary Ann's assurance that she would now never go to sleep till she had prayed God to bless and comfort poor dear Mrs. Arlington.

"Once more farewell! I will write to you as soon as I am landed.

"Ever your grateful L. A."

She kept her word, and Mrs. Derville received the following letter, dated

"Boulogne.

"My journey was short, my voyage prosperous, and I am here in the largest house I could procure, and in the most airy situation possible. By this time my husband knows I am at Boulogne; and while I am writing to you, I am anxiously awaiting the result. I hear he is very ill, and ordered to the south of France as soon as he can be moved.

"It will gratify you to learn that I have most unexpectedly met at Boulogne some distant relations of my mother, and once dear friends of mine — Lady Arlington and her daughters. Her youngest son, now her only one, is also here; — they are on their way to Paris and to Rome; but will not proceed while Mr. Seymour is in his present state.

"My ambassador to my poor husband is returned. He was, I find, much affected at hearing of my arrival, and at receiving my message. He accepts my invitation, and I am now going to superintend his removal hither. Oh, what an interview! and what new trials await me!

"Pray for me, Mr. Derville! pray for me! I will write again in a day or two.

"L. A."

Her next letter ran thus:

"Do not expect me to describe our first meeting! I cannot do it. Such a change in his appearance! Old! emaciated! wan!

"We moved him at last without much inconvenience to himself, and I had the comfort to see that he was dissatisfied with every one's suggestions and management but mine. Still this little pleasure was soon forgotten in a great pain which he inflicted.

"When he was settled in my house, and laid in his new and comfortable bed, he called me to him, and said,

"'I suppose, Louisa, you wish me to believe you came hither only on my account?'

"'I never wish you to believe what is false —you know I do not; and I did come hither merely on your account.'

"'O fy! Do you pretend to tell me you did not know Sir Henry Arlington was here?' —(Sir H. Arlington is that early lover of mine whom I mentioned to you.)

"'I did not know it;—but I am ashamed,' I added, 'of you for asking such a question, and of myself for deigning to reply to it. You know enough of me to be sure that I came hither merely on your account, and that Sir Henry Arlington is the last man whom I should have sought.'

"At this moment, sent for by my husband I found, Sir Henry Arlington entered the room, and but for my earnest entreaties he would have told him his suspicions and my answer; however, he did for once obey me; but he talked *at* us during Sir Henry's whole visit. No proof this of any improvement in his temper and feelings; but I expect some good to result from his daily intercourse with my excellent relation. He is always wishing for Sir Henry to be with him; and for rational piety and powers of arguing I know not his equal, and I feel less wretched than I did. Farewell! My next will tell you that we are going to Nice, or that ALL IS OVER.

"Yours ever."

The phrase "all is over" was written in an almost illegible hand, and blotted with a tear. Soon after came another letter, beginning—

"*All is over*—but do not ask particulars of a scene which, though I can never forget, I can never describe! Still it had for me much of comfort. Such remorse! such an agonized consciousness of his own cruelty to me, and my forbearance! Oh, may that Being whom he so long and deeply offended, forgive him as I have done!

"It will be long ere you and I meet again, my dear friends; for my health is delicate, and requires milder air, and my mind wants the relief of change of scene. I shall therefore accompany Lady Arlington and her daughters to Rome; and remain *en attendant* with Fanny Arlington in the neighbourhood of Paris, till the rest are ready to set off for Italy,

where Sir Henry will join us some months hence.

"I will write to you *de temps en temps*; and pray write to me immediately to Paris, *poste restante*. Farewell!

"Ever yours in much affection,

"L. A."

"Poor thing!" exclaimed Derville, when he had finished reading this letter aloud to his weeping wife, who entered into all his feelings on the occasion. But Jane and Lionel were more inclined to call Mrs. Arlington happy, and rejoice in her liberation from ties so painful and unworthy of her. Still, checked by their mother's tears and father's exclamation, they remained silent.

But Mary Ann said, "Poor thing! Papa, do you call Mrs. Arlington poor now, when she has no longer that cruel man to torment her? Surely, papa, this is one of those losses which I have heard you call gains!"

"It is so to Mrs. Arlington, certainly;—but then she has, my dear, a painful habit of thinking of the interests of others as well as of her own; and I am sure that she would have wished it had been the will of Providence, that her erring husband had been spared for years of penitence and amendment. Besides, under its best circumstances, a death-bed is an awful and affecting scene; and as the final separation even of those who have not lived in love, though connected by the closest ties, is a trying moment, it is evident from this poor lady's letter, that the death-bed scene of her husband was a trial to her indeed—looking back as she must have done to his progress through this world, and forward to him to the world to come. Therefore, Mary Ann, I repeat my epithet of 'poor thing!' and when I write to your munificent friend, I shall not congratulate her on her recovered freedom and the loss of a tormentor, but condole with her on this last serious affliction. However, Mary Ann, I hope that this is *really* the last; and that, when the recollection of her recent suffering is in a degree passed away, her days to come will be as happy as we wish them to be."

At this moment a meaning look and an intelligent smile passed between Lionel and Jane; and little Mary Ann said, "I wonder whether poor Mrs. Arlington will marry again, papa!"

Derville had observed the look and smile, and was amused at Mary Ann's conscious comment on them; but he only replied, "these are early times yet, Mary Ann, to form any conjectures on that subject; but Mrs. Arlington seems so formed to shine both as a wife and mother, that, if there be a man of her acquaintance really deserving of her, I should be glad to hear that she was married again."

"I should be glad also to see her again," said Mrs. Derville, "and I shall think it long till she returns from Italy."

And had she been a less happy woman, Mrs. Derville would have found the time long indeed; for a twelvemonth passed away, and still Mrs. Arlington remained abroad; and though she wrote twice or thrice during that period, she did not talk of returning; while every letter betokened increasing cheerfulness.

Mrs. Derville, meanwhile, had experienced a conscious improvement in her manner of considering her lot in life, and every thing which surrounded her, in consequence of the contrast which she had been enabled to draw between her humble sphere of worldly action and Mrs. Arlington's splendid state, and her happiness was increased also by the birth of another son.

But though Mrs. Derville had not only ceased to wish for improvements in the furniture and decorations of the parsonage, and was ever eager to express her entire contentment, her attentive and grateful husband had not forgotten her wishes; and he was the more willing to remember them, when he found she had forgotten them herself.

Accordingly a cart stopped at the door one day, laden with packages, just arrived by the wagon from London, which were all directed to Mrs. Derville.

"Some new proof, I suppose," said she, "of Mrs. Arlington's grateful remembrance; but I had rather she had sent me word that she was coming home and hither."

Derville smiled, and assisted to unpack the goods. They consisted of a set of neat, light, small mahogany chairs with leather bottoms, fitted for a dining-room, and meant to replace the large and heavy ones of which Mrs. Derville had complained; and a pair of *chaises longues*, to replace the cumbrous sofa. There were also curtains and a carpet proper for a dining-room.

Mrs. Derville was gratified at the supposed attention of her new friend, though her pride was a little wounded at a second obligation of this nature; and she beheld the handsome gift with feelings almost quiet enough to disappoint her husband.

"Well, Anna," said he, "do you not admire these pretty things, that you say so little?"

"O yes! they are all that I could have wished for; but I do not like to receive so many expensive presents, and from the same person.—Mrs. Arlington does too much to oblige me."

"Is Mrs. Arlington then the *only* person living, Anna, who wishes to give you pleasure, that you fancy every present and every attention to your wants must come from *her*?"

The tone of gentle reproach in which this was uttered, corrected by the smile of placid affection, instantly explained the truth to the now delighted Mrs. Derville; her countenance lighted up with the liveliest joy, and with eyes sparkling through tears, she exclaimed,

"Oh! I understand it all now! and the only drawback to my pleasure is, that you should have remembered those moments of weakness in me which I had tried to make you forget."

"I can never forget any thing you do or say, Anna. The record of affection is written on brass; and if they were moments of weakness, they were very excusable ones, and oh! how amply have they been atoned for!"

This was a pleasure of the heart which the rich Mrs. Arlington might have envied her poorer friend; and never did she superintend the arrangement of any of her splendid furniture with half the delight which Mrs. Derville experienced, while arranging those proofs of a *husband's love*. But I must own, that when the sofa was removed, whose merits, once forgotten and despised, her husband had so feelingly related and recalled, Mrs. Derville, overcome by a variety of recollections, burst into tears.

It was removed into Derville's study; and his wife assured him that she really believed she should still find it a more comfortable couch than her new one. "Very likely," he replied; "as a homely old friend, who has been endeared to us by the tender recollections of childhood, is often more welcome to us than the more brilliant friend of later years."

Mrs. Arlington had now been abroad a year and six months, and Lionel had returned to college for the second time; Eustace was old enough to take the living held for him; and Jane and he were on the point of marriage, when Mrs. Derville received a letter from her absent friend, dated "London!"

The date alone excited universal joy in the family; but when the letter was read, it was impossible to make Mary Ann keep her transport in any bounds at first; for it announced that Mrs. Arlington was coming to Lovelands! was coming, if it was convenient to them, to stay a month! And Mary Ann bounded out of the room to tell the conscious Sally, and even the unconscious Nelly, that Mrs. Arlington was coming! and coming to stay a month!

But when the first feelings subsided, it was not all joy to Mrs. Derville. She had a new baby, and was a nurse; and she was afraid that her increased avocations would make it impossible for her to provide for Mrs. Arlington's accommodation, as well as she ought; and she began again to wish she had had this convenience and the other. But she soon laughed at this remnant of her former weakness; and, remembering what sort of woman her guest was, she exclaimed aloud, though alone, "What folly! when I know Mrs. Arlington, and know that all she requires, or can value, will be cordial welcomes from hearts that love her!"

The day before she intended to come, Mrs. Arlington wrote to say that she would arrive the next evening, and all was happy preparation and expectation at Lovelands.

"It is very strange, but very true," said Derville to his wife and children, soon after the letter came, "that though you have all talked of Mrs. Arlington, and of her beauty, with unwearied eloquence and delight, you have never described her person and face to me.—In what style are they? For there are many styles of beauty, you know."

"I think," replied Mrs. Derville, "her face is quite Grecian; her head is beautifully formed, her profile straight, and she always wears her very long black hair, simply dressed, *à l'antique*. She is very tall, and has the finest throat and shoulders, the finest bust I ever saw; but her face is thin, and she does not look happy, and her cheek is pale; but were she at all fatter, or had she more colour, she would not be near as attractive or as interesting to me as she is now."

"No!" said Derville, looking at his wife affectionately. "I have always considered a fine bloom, and a look of health, as great improvers of female beauty."

"Oh, but Mrs. Arlington does not look sickly, father," cried Jane. "She has no colour to be sure, yet she is not pale; and though she is thin, somehow—she is *not* thin, father; and her eyes are so dark and beautiful!"

"Dark!" said her mother, "dark! They are grey, a blue-grey in a strong light; and it is the full, long black eyelash that makes them seem dark."

"Miserable man that I am!" cried Derville in a most pathetic tone, "for it is very clear to me that this enchantress, Mrs. Arlington, has bewildered the senses of my poor wife and daughter, and thrown a spell over their power of vision. One says her eyes are dark, the other that they are light; then Jane talks of paleness, that is not pale—and thinness, that is not thin!"

"O papa! I know the right word," cried Mary Ann; "Mrs. Arlington is slender, but not lean."

"Well said, Mary Ann; and what height is she?"

"O papa! she is very tall—yet no, not so very tall—not too tall, papa."

"That is not so well said; for here is tallness, that is not tall; and the result of your fine descriptions, ladies, is, that to be able to decide what Mrs. Arlington is, I must see her; and I am happy to think she comes tomorrow."

Oh! with what pleased yet anxious alacrity Mrs. Derville and Jane, with Mary Ann assisting, prepared and adorned Mrs. Derville's room and dressing-room for her reception!

But all the preparations for her reception throughout the little domains of Lovelands were not quite finished, and Mrs. Derville with her two daughters, not expecting Mrs. Arlington for an hour or two, had walked into the village to bespeak supplies from her neigh-

bours, in case she wanted them,—when the guest arrived, and Mr. Derville had to receive her alone.

She came without state, in a plain travelling carriage and post-horses, and with only a man and maid.

Mr. Derville thought it rather awkward to have to introduce himself; but he felt it would be very necessary to say "I am Mr. Derville," if his wife and daughters had described him to Mrs. Arlington as ill as they had described her to him; for when he beheld a fattish, blooming, young, and happy-looking woman, smiling as she drove up to the door, he could scarcely believe that he beheld the "pale," "slender," and "unhappy-looking" Mrs. Arlington; and as he gave her his hand to assist her to alight, after she said "I conclude I see Mr. Derville," a meaning smile played round his mouth, while he replied,

"Yes, madam; but I am not sure that you are Mrs. Arlington; all I can say is, that I hope you are."

Mrs. Arlington blushed, and said, "I suppose you did not expect to see such a fat, ruddy woman as I now am; but you will rejoice to hear that what I have lost in delicacy, I have gained in happiness."

Derville's kind reply produced another from his guest; and before the ladies returned Mrs. Arlington almost fancied she had known her host for years. At length Mrs. Derville, walking or rather running along, appeared in sight; for she had seen the carriage wheels and knew her guest was arrived.

Derville ran out to meet her, while the two girls bounded past him into the house. "Poor Mrs. Arlington!" said he, "you will not know her!"

"What!" said Mrs. Derville, turning pale, "is she ill?"

"No; but she has lost all power to charm and interest you. She has gained, poor woman, so much bloom and *embom-point*, and looks so happy, and so brilliantly beautiful!" Mrs. Derville had no time to reply; for Mrs. Arlington came out to meet her, with Mary Ann hanging on one arm, and Jane on the other, and looking like her former self; for emotion on seeing Mrs. Derville, from the remembrance of former times, made her cheek pale, and filled her eyes with tears,

Derville stayed to witness the first meeting; then beckoning Jane and Mary Ann to follow them, he left the ladies alone.

The one had much to tell, and the other much to inquire; nay, both had inquiries to make; and Mrs. Arlington had delicacy of tact enough to know exactly the demands which the self-love of others has on our listening powers; and she could enter with kind readiness into the mother's feeling, when Mrs. Derville rose and said—"I must show you my baby." Mrs. Derville had a great mind to ask what she thought of her husband?—but her courage failed her. However, as if she had the power of divining her friend's wishes, and *true benevolence* has a sort of *divining power*, Mrs. Arlington said, unasked, "I am glad you were not here when I arrived, as it gave me an opportunity of becoming acquainted at once with your husband.—Admirable being!—His person, face and manner are exactly what I could have wished those of such a man to be.—Yes,—the casket is, indeed, worthy of the gem which it holds."

"I knew you would think so," faltered out the delighted wife; and her joy was not chilled on hearing that the baby was the pride of babies, and very like its father.

After prayers, and before they separated for the night, Mrs. Arlington said, with a little blushing hesitation, "I ought to have confessed before I prayed, only that I am not going to confess any thing that I am ashamed of.—You—you remember I invited myself to stay here a whole month."

"Yes, and we hope you mean to keep your word."

"I do, for much depends on it. I am going to be married, and I will be married by no one but you, Mr. Derville; and in this abode of wedded happiness."

"We have had our suspicions on the subject," replied Derville; while Mrs. Derville, kissing Mrs. Arlington affectionately as she spoke, said fervently, "may you be as happy as I am!"

Mrs. Arlington then informed her anxious auditors, that Sir Henry Arlington had renewed his addresses, now made more valuable to her from years of tried constancy, and the consciousness she had how much her parents had wished the union, and that with her whole heart she had consented to be his—"and he will reach the neighbouring watering-place to-night," she added, "which is, I understand, near enough to make it a very easy drive for him hither and back again." And this important communication being made, the happy party separated for the night.

The next morning Mary Ann, who had gone to bed before this disclosure, was informed that Mrs. Arlington was going to be married to her relation, Sir Henry Arlington, and she was excessively anxious to know what sort of a looking man he was. Her mother and sister had the same curiosity; and after they had hinted at their wish, Mrs. Arlington told them he was not handsome certainly, but had the manner and look of a gentleman; "with, as I tell him," said she, "the inquiring and penetrating look of a diplomat;—a look I have observed in other diplomats,—but in him, as I think, at least, it is only intelligent, and has no mixture of cunning."

"Not handsome?"—cried Mary Ann, hanging fondly about Mrs. Arlington, and speaking in a mournful tone, "not handsome!"

"No,—and I am not sure that *you* will not

think him *old* and *ugly*." Mary Ann did not reply, but turned away in silence, and soon after she was heard sobbing violently.

"What is the matter, Mary Ann?" cried Mrs. Derville,—and it was a minute or two before she could sob out, "I can't bear to think that Mrs. Arlington should marry an old and ugly man!" But at length the reasonings of Mrs. Arlington and of her mother, and their common-place assurances, that wisdom and worth, and virtue and talents, were far better things in a man than personal charms, quieted Mary Ann's distress.

"Besides, I love him,—nay, I am in love with him," said Mrs. Arlington, smiling.

"Still I wonder you should fall in love with a man that is old and ugly," said Mary Ann; "and I do wonder to hear mamma say, beauty is of no value in a man, when I am sure she is quite proud of papa's beauty."

"But Mary Ann, I am far more proud of your father's virtues," replied Mrs. Derville; "and as I see you are not quite in a right temper of mind, we will drop this subject for the present."

The next morning Derville walked over to the watering place, to call on Sir Henry Arlington, hoping to prevail on him to return with him to dinner; and Sir Henry drove Derville, and a friend of his own who was with him, to Lovelands in his curricle, just time enough to dress before the last bell rung.

But when Mary Ann heard Sir Henry was come, it was impossible for Sally, or Jane, to persuade her to go down, so great was her dread of seeing the ugly lover of her dear, beautiful Mrs. Arlington, and so sure was she that she should hate the sight of him. At length, however, Jane insisted on leading her into the parlour.

As there were two strangers, Mary Ann did not know which was the dreaded Sir Henry. But she did not venture to look at either, and in an awkward, sheepish manner, wholly unusual to her, she seated herself on the corner of a chair, and began playing with her fingers.

Sir Henry now by accident dropped his glove, and Mrs. Derville desired Mary Ann to pick it up. She did so in such confusion that she dropped it again; and as Sir Henry also stooped for it, their heads knocked against each other.

Mary Ann felt no pain whatever from the blow; but even if she had, she must have been pleased with the sweet and kind tone in which the stranger hoped he had not hurt her; seating himself, and gently dragging her to him as he spoke. The voice and action encouraged her so much, that she looked up and assured him that she was not hurt at all. The stranger, as she did so, regarded her with a smile of pleasure and approbation, which made the conscious Mary Ann cast her eyes on the ground; but again she turned to look at those bright eyes and that fine countenance.

"I think I can guess your name," whispered Sir Henry.

"Oh! no, that I am sure you cannot."

"Oh! yes, you are Mary Ann."

"Yes, to be sure you knew I was not Jane, because she is a woman, and so you thought I must be Mary Ann; but I can't guess who *you* are; all that I know is, that you are not Sir Henry Arlington."

"And how do you know that?"

"Oh! because, because I do know, but I shall not tell."

"Well, if I am not he, who is?"

"Oh! that gentleman at the window, to be sure, talking to papa!" Then looking at Sir Henry earnestly, she added, "Oh! no, I am sure *you* cannot be Sir Henry Arlington."

"What can she mean?" asked Sir Henry of the pleased Mrs. Arlington.

"Come hither, Mary Ann, and tell me in my ear, why you are so sure that cannot be Sir Henry?"

"Because," speaking in her ear, "because you told me, I might think him old and ugly looking, and that gentleman is quite handsome and looks so good and so good-natured!"

"And it is, perhaps, because he looks so good and so good-natured, that you think him handsome; for I assure you that is Sir Henry Arlington."

"O dear! I am so glad!" cried the affectionate child, returning to Sir Henry.

"Glad of what, Mary Ann?"

"That you are really Sir Henry."

And not long after, on Sir Henry's asking how Nelly did, Mary Ann told him there was time enough to go and see Nelly and her puppies and the rabbits before dinner; and as Sir Henry was kind enough to indulge her wish, dinner was actually on the table before Sir Henry returned, leading the delighted Mary Ann by the hand.

Sir Henry made himself equally agreeable to the mother as to the younger daughter; for he nursed the baby as well as she did, and declared that though he loved all babies, he thought hers was the loveliest that he had ever seen. It was impossible after this, that Sir Henry could have a fault in Mrs. Derville's eyes; and Derville soon learned to value him on surer ground, on his rational piety, his highly cultivated mind, his talents, his temper, and his active virtues.

One day Mrs. Arlington took Mrs. Derville aside, and said, "A living in my gift, of at least a thousand per annum, is now vacant; and I will present your husband to it, or your son, or whichever you please."

"My son, by all means," she replied, "I do not hesitate one moment; for indeed I have profited by your kind admonitions, and have now no wish ungratified."

"Not for yourself, perhaps, but you may have for your children; therefore Mr. Derville shall hold it for Lionel till he is old enough to

take it; and if you choose to lay by the income of it, it will enable you to add considerably to your fortune at the end of three years. And Lionel may be his father's curate." This point being settled, Mrs. Arlington frankly asked Mrs. Derville, "Whether she and her husband were pained or pleased with her presumption, in having dared to show her sense of the service Mrs. Derville had done her, by a pecuniary donation to her child." And Mrs. Derville as frankly owned that they had received it as it was meant, and the other gifts too; but that the idea that the chairs, &c. came from her, had been painful to her.

"I will tell you why I asked," said Mrs. Arlington; "I wish to give Jane money to buy clothes and furniture, but I was afraid you might think it was taking a liberty. But you see I must do something for her, as I have given Mary Ann money, and Lionel a living. And really during my residence abroad I have not spent half of my income, and have more money, therefore, just now than I know what to do with. Do then assist me in taking a little off my hands."

The scruples of the Dervilles were soon silenced; and the kindness of Mrs. Arlington enabled the young couple when they married, to purchase all the comforts, even comforts bordering on luxuries, which wealth only can procure. But previously to her own marriage, Jane had the honour and happiness of being bridemaid, with the delighted Mary Ann, to their beloved Mrs. Arlington, who, at the simple church of Lovelands, received from the hand of the man she most *venerated*, that of the man she most *loved*.

Our heroine's second marriage took place under far happier auspices than had attended her first. No consciousness that her choice had clouded over a parent's brow with forebodings of wedded misery, now occurred to damp her bridal hopes; but on the contrary, she knew that could her parents witness what was then passing on earth, their warmest blessings would have attended a union, likely, they would have believed, to fulfil their fondest hopes.

That union still remains blissful and unbroken, and cemented still more by the birth of two children. Lady Arlington has also the happiness of witnessing that of Emily, her husband's innocent victim, who is well and happily married to the lover mentioned some pages back. But, as there is always some drawback on human felicity, there are times when Lady Arlington regrets with vain but heartfelt bitterness, that she rejected in early youth the substance for the shadow; and, by refusing that love which now she valued as her dearest earthly treasure, had not only deprived an idolizing parent of the greatest joy he could have known, that of witnessing the happiness of an only child; but had doomed *him to the bitter* agony of witnessing that child's misery. And while these thoughts are uppermost in her mind, her sense of happiness is for a time annihilated. But it soon revives to all its force again; and whenever the mistress of the Lawn-house now meets the once envied Mrs. Derville, she has a pride in exclaiming, "And *I* too am a WIFE TO BE ENVIED."

[In compliance with the desire of its author, I give the following narrative.]

PROPOSALS OF MARRIAGE.

"WE know what we are; but know not what we shall be," said the poor Ophelia; and she could not have made a truer observation, as my experience tells me, had she been in her right senses,—for it never came into my head to suspect that I should turn author. And still I think it an odd fancy in me; especially as my story is a true one, and I am the real hero of it. However, narrate it I will, as my ambition now is to be a writer; and if that ambition should go on to increase, I shall probably be a published writer too; for I think by means of some scribbling man or woman of my acquaintance, I shall be able, if I wish it, to get into print.

I shall be very careful to avoid in my own tale whatever has distressed me in the stories of others. Therefore, though I would on no account tell the reader my own real name, that of my family, or of any one person alluded to, I will not talk of *Mr. D*—— or *Lady C*——, but I will give each person as pretty a sounding name as I can think of; and sometimes perhaps it will be appropriate to the character.

To begin then with myself.

At the time I am writing this, I am a healthy man of sixty-four; and am well known in the fashionable world as the Honourable Tynley Trésgothic, a very rich old bachelor, the younger son of the Earl of Oldworth; consequently I need not tell you that I have long been the object of matrimonial speculations to virgins of ton, who have been twenty years at least expecting the right man to appear;—and to comely widows of a certain age, who have acquired the habit of living beyond their income. Whether therefore I am still a bachelor, or whether I am going to marry, will be seen during the progress of these memoirs.

But I fear that when I said above I would not do what has always annoyed me in the stories of other people, I exceeded the strict truth; for I am disappointed myself when a particular description is not given of the face, person, and dress of the hero and heroine; but I cannot summon up courage to describe my

own. All I can do, however, I will. I will say that I am tall, florid, young-looking for my age, as I am told, and not by my glass alone; that my usual costume is a bottle-green coat; that through all the variations of fashion I have worn white silk stockings, and light kerseymere breeches, with knee and shoe-buckles; and that my hair, which has only lately been cropped close to my head, (till now that it is white with age,) has always been lightly powdered. I have never worn a wig, except when I was a child;—and I am hanging up at Oldworth Castle, in a complete suit of light blue velvet, a wig, a sword, and a hat under my arm, in all the consequence of ten years old. Let me add, that, such as I have described myself, I am usually to be seen every night of a favourite opera, at the corner of the third row in the pit, on the side of *la prima donna*;—that, habited in a loose great-coat, I may also be seen when a favourite actor or actress plays, in the third row of the pit at Drury-lane or Covent Garden;—and I will venture to say, that there is scarcely a fashionable assembly in London to which I am not invited, and where I am not commonly to be met for an hour or two.

Reader, if thou art a young man or woman of fashion, thou must have met me very often; and when thou hast read this tale, I suspect that thou wouldst not be sorry to be better acquainted with me, shouldst thou be in the situation of which it treats. But I beg thy pardon, for I feel that I am talking a great deal to little purpose, and already deserving the reproach of garrulous old age—Now then to get on with my story.

I have already said that I am a frequenter of fashionable assemblies, and they are often enlivened by fine music, from professors and public singers, or by pleasing performances, chiefly vocal from amateurs. But these latter performers rarely exhibit except in small select parties,—and of such parties I am very fond.

In these meetings, which are favourable to the cultivation not only of acquaintances but of intimacy, a friend presented me to Lady Mary Lovely, eldest daughter of the Earl and Countess of Vaurien, who had charmed me by her beauty, her manner, and her voice, and I found her conversation equal to them. She had also another charm for me—her name was *Mary*.

Lady Mary was not slow to discover the favourable impression which she had made; and she tried to increase it by the kindest smiles and most flattering attention. But, as I am really no coxcomb, I was not weak enough to believe that this fine young woman had any intention of being Lady Mary Trés-gothic. But the world thought otherwise; and Lord Lawless,—a man of my own age, but whose hair was of a fine purplish brown, with whiskers of the same colour; and with cheeks *couleur de rose*, but whose knees tottered under him, and whose legs were like spindles,—was seen to turn as pale as he could turn, whenever I approached Lady Mary. For Lord Lawless was her declared lover, and highly approved of by Lord and Lady Vaurien, who had twelve children, expensive habits, an embarrassed fortune, and no principle. But with this expected sacrifice of herself to the wants of her selfish parents I was not acquainted during the first weeks of my intimacy with Lady Mary, though I soon discovered that she was unhappy; and several times I had seen her start, change colour, cast an inquiring, anxious glance round the room, or through the folding doors that led from one room to the other, and then fall into complete abstraction seemingly from all external objects. At these times I used to say to myself, "Poor girl, I fear she is in love!" And I ceased to wonder, as I had often done before, at Lady Mary's being unmarried at the age of three-and-twenty.

Who the object of her affections was I had yet to learn;—but I was soon enabled to discover.

One evening Lady Mary was in vain *solicited*, by the lady of the house and myself, and *commanded* by her mother to sing a little ballad in which she particularly excelled. But she resolutely refused to comply, urging her utter inability. Our hostess and I, seeing her unusually pale and agitated, desisted from our suit; but Lady Vaurien said to her, in a low voice, "Foolish, obstinate girl; I know why you cannot sing it."

"Then I wonder, madam, you should ask me."

And the angry mother turned away, giving her the look of a fiend; while I, full of pity, wonder, just indignation, and affectionate curiosity, sat down by Lady Mary.

"O mother—yet no mother!" I almost audibly murmured; and I looked at my trembling neighbour with such interest expressed on my countenance, that the poor thing was soothed, though affected, and said to me in a low voice,

"You know not how precious to me the consciousness of your friendship is; for indeed, dear sir, I want a friend."

At this moment the Honourable Mr. Merital passed us; a very fine young man, who had just taken orders. As he left the room, he looked back, and his eyes met those of Lady Mary. The glance was momentary; but his expression could not be mistaken—it was that of love; and when I turned round to see what effect it had on Lady Mary, I found her countenance so cleared up! and though she looked thoughtful, she seemed no longer painfully so. In a few minutes after, she said to me, "I wish you would have the goodness to go and see whether Arthur Merital be gone."

I did so; and returning told her he was then going down stairs. Immediately, seeing her mother coming up to her again, she said to me with a very meaning smile, "I can sing now." And as Lady Vaurien did come to persecute her into compliance, it was well for her that she was able to obey her. She then sat down to the instrument, and sung the following song, though not with a very steady voice.

I give the words, because they were evidently descriptive of her own feelings; and it was cruel in her mother to request her to sing them when she knew Merital was within hearing.

SONG.

To the Tune of "Vous me quittez."

"Yes, we must part, since fate has so decreed it,
And far I'll rove, my fettered heart to free;
For love should die when hope no more can feed it,—
And I as yet too fondly think on thee.

Nor think that I'm in search of pleasure roving!
By thee unshared, all joys are vain to me:
I go in hopes, the power of absence proving,
I, with less pain, may learn to think on thee.

Judge by thyself, whene'er the past recalling,
Thy pensive memory fondly turns to me;
Judge by thy tears, in spite of manhood falling,
What I endure whene'er I think on thee.

But Heaven forbid that thou, like me, shouldst languish!
So well I love, from selfish views so free;
I wish thee, Henry, ne'er to know such anguish,
As tears my heart whene'er I think on thee."

Well, I had learned three things that evening. The first was, to think ill of Lady Vaurien;—the second, that Lady Mary was not only in love, but was beloved;—the third, that Arthur Merital was the lover; and moreover, I suspected the union had been forbidden by parental authority.

I also recollected with no small pleasure, that Lady Mary had told me she valued my friendship, and that she wanted a friend.—Still, though I had reason to think she wished to confide in me, I did not feel myself authorized to solicit her confidence sooner than she chose to offer it; and week succeeded to week, month to month, and I met Lady Mary, and saw her grow thinner and thinner, paler and paler, and evidently more and more depressed,—yet still she was silent, and so was I, on the subject of her apparent uneasiness.

Her approaching marriage with Lord Lawless was now the general theme of conversation; and I heard that he had bought her of her mercenary parents, by promising to provide for three of the sons, and to take her without any dower, then or in future.

How great was my indignation at this intelligence!

I could understand the impropriety, not to call it madness, of a union between two noble beggars, like Merital and Lady Mary; but I thought it hardship enough for two such admirable young persons to be doomed to pine in hopeless love; and to force Lady Mary to marry one man while her heart was another's, appeared to me the climax of parental cruelty;—that man, too, old, dissolute, and hollow-hearted;—a man who could not, I was sure, fulfil the promises by which he obtained her, as he was really not rich, and had but little interest.

While I was feeling this anxiety concerning Lady Mary, life, which usually wanted interest with me, acquired a very strong one; and I was perpetually forming plans, and abandoning them again, to serve these parted lovers, as I now found they had long been; but they had been parted in vain, for one interchange of a look of still-existing tenderness had hitherto kept the flame alive in both, and had proved that there is no cure for love, but absolute separation and complete years of absence.

"But what can be the cause," I was ever saying to myself, "of the change in Lady Mary? Surely she will never go to the altar willingly, and they will not presume to drag her thither?" when, alas! one evening she came to a party, leaning on the arm of Lord Lawless, who looked all delight, and seemed to say, "Am I not at last a happy man?"

Lady Mary, however, looked anything but happy; and I saw that she was vainly desirous of speaking to me apart. I therefore contrived to get near her, and to say in her ear,—"Can what I hear be true? Are you really going to sacrifice yourself to that man?"

"I fear I must," she replied in the accent of a broken-hearted woman; "and sacrifice myself for the good of my family. Besides, why should I not now? Arthur Merital is going to be married—you understand me."

"*I do. Still*, pause ere you resolve."

Lady Mary sighed, but spoke not *then;* however, as she walked forward, she said to me, with a look of excessive agony, "O that Lord Lawless were such a man as yourself!"

"Would he were for thy sake, poor thing!" thought I; supposing that Lady Mary meant she wished he was as well principled, as in that case he would not have persisted in addresses so odious to the object of them.

I scarcely slept that night, so full was I of wishes to serve Lady Mary. But could her lover really be false, and so soon after that look too? *I could not believe it.* I knew how constant man's love could be, and I suspected that Lady Mary was imposed upon by those interested in deceiving her.

The next morning, however, though my night had been nearly sleepless, I rose at my usual hour, and was at breakfast at half-past nine, when my valet informed me that a young lady and her maid were below, and wished to speak to me.

"Which?" said I, "the young lady, or the maid?"

"The young lady."

"What! a woman grown?"

"O yes, sir, quite a fine young lady, indeed."

"This is very strange," thought I, but I desired she might be shown up directly. And my heart whispered that it was Lady Mary Lovely.

Nor was I deceived. It was Lady Mary; who throwing herself nearly overwhelmed with flutter on a chair, apologized in imperfect accents for the liberty which she had taken, and the indecorum of which she was guilty.

"I am conscious," replied I, "of nothing but the happiness which you have conferred, and the hopes of your entire confidence, which your visit holds out to me, as you must be sure, Lady Mary, that I will do anything in my power to serve you."

"Will you—will you, indeed?" said the agitated girl.

"I will—that is, unless it be something very unreasonable; and that I know it cannot be."

"Do not be too sure of that."

"No! Well, slight difficulties shall not discourage me; and now tell me the whole story of your love and your misery."

"My story," she replied, "is soon told;—Arthur Merital and I have been attached to each other from early youth, and we were allowed to associate together, till the danger which might have been foreseen had been incurred to the utmost;—for we had learned to love, and then found we must as certainly despair. And we were forbidden even to speak to each other. Nor was the distant prospect which Merital had of a family living, allowed to hold out to us any chance of future happiness. I will not dwell on what I felt at seeing all the prospects of my youth thus destroyed; and though solicited to accept the addresses of other young men, I rejected them almost with disgust, as I had a sadly soothing consolation in my determined constancy to my first love; especially as, whenever we met, the eyes of Merital evinced a constancy equal to my own. This consciousness, too, prevented me from being unhappy. But now—" Here Lady Mary paused, too much affected to proceed for a few moments; then recovering herself, she went on;—"But now the case is widely different, and I am *miserable*; he is faithless, and I *desperate*. My parents are in distressed circumstances. Lord Lawless is liberal in his offers, my filial piety is called upon, and my love for my dear brothers—and above all, perhaps I am urged by pique and wounded feelings of my sex, to become a wife, before Merital becomes a husband." Here she gave way to a passionate flood of tears; and though I disapproved her last mentioned motive of action, I deeply sympathized in her very natural distress.

"Compose yourself, my dear child," said I very tenderly.

"Would I were your child!" she exclaimed, "then I might have a chance of being happy."

"Perhaps you still may. But you seemed to imply that you had a favour to ask of me."

"I have; but such a favour that I really dare not utter it."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; one that nothing but the peculiar circumstances in which I am placed, and my horror of Lord Lawless, could have induced me to think of. It is so strange a thing to ask—so *very* strange!"

"Keep me no longer in suspense, name the desire. What do you wish me to do?"

"Marry me yourself!"

Here she hid her head; I was glad she did, for I could not help exclaiming,—"Strange, indeed!"—and I should not have liked to see the poor thing's confusion.

But, as soon as I had recovered my surprise and consternation, I must own that I cast a look into the pier glass opposite, and did not wonder I was preferred to Lord Lawless; but this was but a momentary weakness, and vanity was soon swallowed up in better feelings. I told Lady Mary that I was flattered by her preference, and the more so, because she knew that I had never tried to obtain it—had never had the vanity to believe that her attentions to me could be prompted by any other feelings than those of friendship.

I also added, that my affections had long been buried in the grave; and that I had always resolved never to marry. But that our views usually changed with circumstances, and that like Benedict,—"when I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live to be married;"—that therefore, if there was no other way of saving her from that hateful Lord Lawless, I would offer the same terms as he did to her father, and I should, I doubted not, obtain her for myself, as she was ready to marry me, though she had not yet ever consented to accept Lord Lawless. But that I must beg a little time to consider of her proposal; "because I must own," said I, "that in spite of your youth, your beauty, and your various charms, my heart remains a constant and a widowed heart; and I feel towards you no other sensation than that of a parent towards a child."

Lady Mary looked pleased, and perhaps was so. Still the sex's vanity in her must have been a little mortified at the excessive sang froid with which I had received such a proposal from a very fine girl; however, she did not betray mortification if she felt it. And now, being fearful of exciting suspicion by her absence, she bade me a hasty "farewell," after overwhelming me with excuses and expressions of gratitude; and I promised that in less than two days she should hear from me, or see me.

I was truly glad to get rid of her; for my mind was now made up as to the best course for me to pursue, and the first thing I resolved upon was to go to ——'s auction room, in hopes of seeing Arthur Merital, who used to be a frequent lounger there; from the hope, as I now suspected, of seeing Lady Mary, whose mother, though she was so poor as to think it necessary to sell her child, had always money to expend on her own selfish luxuries, and was for ever buying old china *ormoulu* vases, or things of that sort.

"If he be faithless, he will probably not be there," thought I; "if faithful, he will;" and on entering the room, he was the first object whom I saw. He was examining very attentively a beautiful ivory work-basket, and I ventured to accost him with "That is a beautiful thing, Mr. Merital."

"Very."

"It is just the thing for a lover to present to his mistress; and you, perhaps, think so too. And if it be not impertinent, I presume you are thinking of presenting it to the young lady to whom the world says you are soon to be married?"

This was very presumptuous, I own; but poor Merital was conscious of feelings which made him insensible to my boldness, for he remembered my intimacy with Lady Mary.

"I! I going to be married!—Can she—Can she think, sir?—The report is wholly false. It is my brother who is going to be married, not I; though in his absence I escort his lady. I marry! I marry! Mr. Trésgothic, I shall never marry now—never—never."

As he said this, he raised his fine eyes to heaven with such a despairing look! and I read in them lady Mary Lovely at full length.

"Oh!" thought I, "thou art a lover after my own heart;" and having now gained what I wanted, I left the room.

I lived only in the next street, so I went home to see if there were any letters for me; and I found one, the contents of which had such an effect on me, that I seemed to tread in air, and ordering my carriage round immediately, I desired it to drive me to—no matter to what street or square—but to the Lord Chancellor's. I shall not say to what Lord Chancellor's; nor, as mystery always enhances the effect of a story, will I say any thing to let my readers know in what year I am writing. I shall only say that Chancellors, sometimes, are men who have a pleasure in remembering favours done them when they wanted friends, and are honourably proud of proving by their actions that they are not ungrateful. Such a Chancellor was he to whom I was hastening, and I was one of his earliest and best friends.

It is a fine thing to live in a country where a man who has talents and industry may raise himself to the highest honours of the state;—and my ennobled friend had done so. I knew he was not sitting, as term was over, so I hoped to find him at home, and I did.

"——," said I, as I entered, (for indeed I did venture to call him by his name,) "I am come to ask a favour of you."

"I am glad of it. You have promised to do me that kindness for many years, but have never done it yet; and yet who has such claims on me as you have?"

"Well, well, you will own I am now come to demand payment of the *debt* due, with *interest*, when I tell you I come to ask you to give me the living of ———."

"That living! It is not vacant yet; and though the incumbent is very old, (eighty, at least,) he is very healthy."

"No; he is probably dead by this time. Here is a letter from his physician, who has written to me by to-day's post, on business of my own."

He read the letter, and found that the incumbent was literally in the agonies of death; and the moment after, he received an express to tell him he was actually dead.

"There," said I, "and remember, I am the first applicant."

"True; but it is one of the very best livings in my gift, and—"

"I am one of the very best friends in your possession."

"Very true; but one of the ministers, instigated, I suspect, by a very great personage, has expressed a wish to have—"

"What he or she shall not have; and I want this living for a person they would approve—for Arthur Merital, whose father, you know, always votes with government; and I want this living for him to enable him to marry Lady Mary Lovely, Lord Vaurien's daughter, a devoted slave to ministers; and your other asking friends only want to give it to some one of their adherents and favourites."

"What shall I do? I wish, you know, to oblige you."

"And by obliging me, you will not only make two worthy and fond hearts happy, but you will certainly mortify and disappoint your old and determined enemy in the House, Lord Lawless; who has, you know, no mercy on you, and who is a suitor to Lady Mary, with her selfish parents' approbation."

I thought I was justified in holding out this temptation to his bad feelings, if he had any, that they might come in aid of his good ones. But whether they did or not, I do not pretend to say; all I know is, that he promised me the living, and that while I stayed, I had the satisfaction of seeing him write one or two letters in answer to applications, saying it was already engaged.

My next visit was to Lord and Lady Vaurien. I found them alone, and in much emotion. Lady Mary had that morning on her return home, positively declared that nothing should compel her to marry Lord Lawless.

I began thus—"I understand, my lord, that you and Lady Vaurien wish to marry Lady Mary to Lord Lawless, and that she is utterly averse to the union. Is this true? Believe me, the question is not one of mere curiosity."

Lord Vaurien answered me at once that it was true; while his lady's cunning little eyes, as she fixed them on me, twinkled with indescribable shrewdness.

"Then know, my lord, I am authorized by Lady Mary to ask your leave to propose to marry her *myself*—having her free consent to wed, if I can win her."

"You! you!" exclaimed both the delighted parents at once.

"Yes; and on the same terms as Lord Lawless offered. I will provide for your three boys; for I have, you know, infinitely more wealth than he has; and through my connexions more interest."

"Oh, to be sure," cried Lady Vaurien. "Besides, we know if you make a promise you will keep it; and that is more than we can be sure of with Lord Lawless. Well, really, Mary has been very sly;—we saw her bent on refusing Lord Lawless, but we did not suspect the cause was attachment to you."

"Attachment to me!" echoed I, looking at her with scornful indignation; "No;—you know it was *not*. But, my lord, you have not assured me of your consent."

"I assure you not only of my consent, but of my warmest approbation; and ah! what a comfort it is to think that my necessities will not have compelled the sacrifice of my child!"

"My lord," I replied very gravely, "in accepting *my* proposals, you sacrifice your child to your necessities. If I were of a proper age to marry Lady Mary, it would still be a sacrifice, for you know she loves another."

"Dear me!" said both the parents, "we thought—we hoped—"

"No, Lady Vaurien," said I, "you *know* that you *knew* the contrary; you knew Lady Mary's heart was still Arthur Merital's, and yet you urged her to marry—and marry such a man too!"

"I certainly much prefer you, Mr. Trésgothic, and really cannot allow such a marriage to be a hardship."

"Then I am sorry for you, madam. I pity any woman who can think a marriage of mere interest is any thing better than legal prostitution. But I must beg your patient attention, while I relate to you what it is necessary for you to know, in order to excuse the liberty which I am going to take."

They promised me their attention, and ordered the servants to deny them to every one;—but there is nothing they would not have promised me at that moment; for I had many thousands a year—and I was to be their son-in-law. I am now going to appear what I have some pretensions to be—a *heros de roman*—and you are now going to hear the history of my life. But I did wish to tell it to more respectable auditors than Lord and Lady Vaurien, and more interested too;—for though the husband did appear to hear every word, I soon found that the wife's eyes were riveted on a beautiful emerald heart that I wore on my watch-chain, which dangled in my hand, and I had no doubt that she was saying to herself, "I wonder whether he will give that to Mary, and whether Mary would give it to me!"—But I am too prolix. Now then to begin.

"Perhaps you already know," said I, "that my grandmother's immense fortune—a city fortune—was, according to the marriage settlement, settled on the second son of my father, being intended, no doubt, to purchase another peerage for the family. You also know that by the death of the first and second son I became the second son and heir to the fortune, of which, alas! I gained possession when it had ceased to have any charms for me, and when it could excite in me, at first, no feelings but the bitterness of unavailing regret."

"Did you not immediately try to procure a peerage?" asked Lady Vaurien, eagerly.

"No, madam; the only woman whom I could ever wish to decorate with a coronet was become the wife of another. For her sake I might have sought distinctions; but with my hope my ambition died also. I had loved, passionately loved, Lady Vaurien, and been beloved in return. But I was then only the third son of Lord Oldworth, and my mistress was rich. Accordingly my suit was rejected;—but I was sure of my own constancy, and equally so of my mistress's, and I resolved to await patiently the chances of life, hoping that something might turn up in our favour; but in less than a twelvemonth after I had been refused by her father, she married my rival, a man of large fortune. I cannot, dare not dwell on the frenzied agonies which this event occasioned me. Yes; let me think it was frenzy that prompted me to do what I did. I copied out part of the song of 'Thou art gone awa' from me Mary,' slightly altering the lines to suit my situation;—they are as follows:—

Until this hour I never thought
That aught could alter thee, Mary!
Thou 'rt still the mistress of my heart,
Think what thou wilt of me, Mary!

Though thou 'st been false, yet while I live
I 'll still wish well to thee, Mary!
I can't forget, but I forgive,
The wrong thou 'st done to me, Mary!

"This was a song she used to sing with great feeling, and she often expressed her wonder at the falsehood which occasioned it. Having finished the extract, I watched for her carriage one day in Bond-street; and as she got out of it I forced it into her hand without

speaking. I then gazed my last on her; for she looked so beautiful, though very pale, that I dared not see her again; and I instantly went abroad; but not alone; my kind mother went with me; and to her soothings, and her watchful tenderness, I owed the recovery of my health and of my mind. It was now that I became possessed of my grandmother's fortune; but it came too late—and I fear that I, at first, received it unthankfully.

"I remained abroad some years after my mother left me; but on my father's death I thought it right to return to England to try to console her, as she had consoled me; and from her I learned that my faithless Mary's husband had spent all her fortune and his own; that she was in reduced circumstances; and that he was living abroad. She was then poor, while I was rich!—and call it weakness if you please, but I could not endure the idea, ill as she had used me, that she should want aught which money could purchase; and I grieved to think that I could not befriend her.

"My mother, on my father's death, shut herself up at her country-seat, which was within ten miles of Clifton; I therefore usually rode thither every morning, by way of change of scene. One morning I followed by chance a shabbily-dressed invalid, leaning on her maid, who seemed to walk with difficulty; when, as she reached a pastry-cook's shop, she turned her head, saw me, uttered a sort of exclamation, and fainted away. I caught her in my arms, and carried her into the shop. But judge of my feelings when I found that it was my once-loved Mary! Her insensibility was short; and when she recovered, I remembered nothing at that moment but that she was ill, and that she had fainted at sight of me. But such meetings and such feelings, though they can never be forgotten, had better not be described. Suffice that I insisted on supporting her home. And it was such a home!—shabby, dark, unwholesome—and I entreated to be allowed to see her the next day. She did not say No, and I fancied that she meant to say Yes. I therefore called, but she refused to see me. I called again—but she was still denied.

At length I heard she was considerably worse, and was in the greatest danger; and I called every day, and almost every hour, to inquire how she did. One day when I called, the servant gave me a letter addressed to me; and changed as the characters were, with a beating heart I recognized the precious handwriting of Mary.

I instantly flew to my hotel with frenzied impetuosity, and locking myself into a room, I read—

"I feel that I am dying; and as death, they say, dissolves all ties and all obligations, but such as affection sanctions and God approves, I trust that I may venture to disclose the secrets of my heart; and as death endues me with this privilege, I welcome its approach. Know then, that I have always loved, and never loved any other than you. But I was taught to believe that you were false, and engaged to another. Nay, they even caused your marriage to be inserted in the paper. But even that failed—and I declared your faithlessness was no excuse for mine.

"The next attempt they made was a terrible one!—My father declared, if I did not marry Mr. Desmond, that he must destroy himself; that he owed him a great sum of money, which he could discharge no other way than by giving him my hand. I refused to believe this at first; but he brought me documents to prove it; and lastly, he produced the pistol, and aimed it at his life.

"This is no new tale—no new incident—such things have been tried on others. With me the plan succeeded, and I married;—married without one word of apology or excuse to you; and yet I knew myself excusable. Judge then what I felt, when you put those touching, generous lines in my hand—lines too which reminded me of former days. My first impulse was to write to you, and exculpate myself; but my second was to repress the culpable, ungenerous, and dangerous design. 'No,' said I to myself, 'if he still believes me unworthy, he may forget me and be happy. But if he knows me to be aggrieved, and not guilty, he will love me still, and perhaps seek me still;—and then how can I be sure that I shall be able to resist the pleadings of my own heart!'

"The first virtue is to avoid temptation; and I, acting on this principle, forbore to write to you. O my beloved Tylney! may I not now rejoice humbly over the consciousness of having done thus—of having distrusted my own strength—since I owe perhaps to that, the support and comfort which I now feel on this, my bed of death!

"I have only to add, that my husband, conscious that I never loved him, and suspecting that I still loved you, treated me with excessive unkindness; and that I even rejoiced in the utter destruction of our fortune, because it ridded me of him. I had been gradually dying of what is called a broken heart before he left me—and the struggle is nearly over.

"I have now unburthened my heart, and it will be some comfort to me in my last moments, to know that you will love, not hate my memory; but it is also necessary for my peace, that you should respect my reputation. Alone and unprotected I cannot, must not receive your visits, even if I were able; and I know you would yourself shrink from being the means of aspersing my hitherto unblemished fame. We have therefore met for the last time; but I saw by your manner that you had forgiven my fault, even before you heard my exculpation, and the remembrance will, even to my last breath, be sweet to my soul.

"God bless you, dearest of men! Surely, surely, the hope that we shall meet again, in another world, is not, cannot be delusion.

MARY."

Reader, I did not repeat this letter to my noble auditors; I only told them the heads of it; that was enough for them; but I did tell them how I acted in consequence of it. I mounted my horse, and set off instantly to my mother, and put the letter, without speaking, into her hand.

She read it with tears, and said, "What would you have me do?"

"What your heart dictates."

"I understand you," she replied. Then writing a few lines, she ordered the carriage.

"Lord Vaurien," said I after a pause, "you remember my mother?"

"Remember her! I should be ashamed if I did not remember a woman who was an honour and an ornament to her sex! Oh, how proud have I and other young men felt, when allowed to see her to her carriage; and we seemed to respect ourselves for being able to feel pleasure in showing our respect to virtues like hers."

"I thank you, my lord," I replied with deep emotion at this just and well-felt tribute to the worth of my incomparable mother. "Well then, Lord Vaurien, this spotless and generally revered being undertook the care of my poor Mary; and as soon as we reached Clifton, she sent up the note which she had written to her, to prepare her for a visit from her. Mary, gratified beyond measure at this, the greatest proof which I could give her of my pardon and my respect, received her according to our utmost wishes, and complied with all my mother desired.

"That evening, wrapped up in blankets, and supported by pillows, she was conveyed to the best lodging in the place, and very near the Well. There my mother remained with her, taking on her the office of head nurse; and as it was impossible that calumny itself could censure the woman protected by Lady Oldworth, Mary consented to see me once or twice a week in my mother's presence; and she was evidently improved in strength, when the news reached us that her husband was dead.

"What prospects of happiness now opened upon me! How rapidly did Mary's health seem to return with hope and happiness! while my beloved mother enjoyed the bright prospects of her dear charge and of her son.

"But one day, when Mary had seemed unusually well, difficulty of breathing suddenly returned, and even while she was echoing my words, 'how happy we shall be after all our sufferings!' she suddenly became chilled and convulsed, and died without a groan."

Here I went into the inner apartment for a moment, to indulge unseen an emotion, which I believed was wholly unshared. But I suspect I wronged Lord Vaurien, as he had betrayed once or twice some corresponding feelings; and I was very apt to believe he sympathized with me, and had never loved Lady Vaurien.

"Now, my lord," said I, when I returned, "I am come to that part of my story which will explain and account for my having troubled you with these long details.

"Perhaps I felt this blow more, because I had learned to hope; but I had so long despaired, and made up my mind to the utter blight of my affections, that I was not depressed as much as might have been expected. Besides, I had the consolation of knowing that my wealth had contributed all that wealth could do to the comfort of the beloved being whom I had lost; that my own mother had been her nurse, her support, and her soother in her last illness and last moments; and above all, I knew those last moments were such as to give me every security that she was now happy. Still I had all my wonted fantasticality of feeling and plans when distressed, and my mother wisely indulged me in it.—But I see Lady Vaurien looks weary and impatient."

"Oh dear no; I am quite interested. Pray go on as long as you please."

"One of these plans was this;—in order to save one if not more virtuous couple from being sacrificed in future to the selfish designs of parents on their children; to prevent such misery as my beloved Mary had experienced from a marriage in which the heart had no share, I laid by a certain sum of money, which I resolved to give to the first young couple who should be unable, from poverty, to marry for inclination; and who should also be exposed, by the avarice of their parents, to the danger of forming a union odious to themselves, and hateful in the sight of God.

"The sum has now been appropriated, but not called for during so many years, that it is now a very considerable one, and large enough to portion off more than one bride; and I consider the money deposited for that purpose, as my best tribute to the memory and the misfortunes of my only love. Hear me then, Lord and Lady Vaurien; I repeat to you my solemn promise to provide for three of your boys; but I do not aspire to be the husband of Lady Mary. No, my lord, let her marry the man of her choice, and I will give her a sufficient dower."

"With all my heart!" cried Lord Vaurien eagerly.

But Lady Vaurien said, "But, sir, Mr. Merital has nothing!"

"He has Lady Mary's heart, madam; and I am told that he has virtue and talents."

"Yes, sir, but people cannot live on them; and Mary has been expensively brought up."

"Well, madam, Mr. Merital will, to my

certain knowledge, be inducted in a few days to a living worth at least from twelve to fifteen hundred pounds per annum. Will that satisfy you?"

"O yes!—and if you will not really marry Mary yourself!"

"I marry her, madam, after what I know! Do you think me a villain? O fy! Lady Vaurien, I blush for you."

"And so do I," said her lord; "and I rejoice most heartily, in the dear girl's happy prospects. And how, sir, shall we show our gratitude to you?"

"By not naming it. Yes, you can oblige me by simply telling Lady Mary I have made my proposals, and that they are accepted; and leave me to disclose the truth to her."

They promised; and as Lady Mary's accepted lover, I was to return to dinner.

Certainly this was the happiest day in my life. I was sure of having been the means to crown the wishes of two faithful and fond hearts; and I felt that I had not lived in vain.

My next step was to call on Mr. Merital; but, lest I should not find him at home, I wrote to him a letter, explaining all that had passed, and engaging him to come that evening to Lord Vaurien's, and send for me out. But I found him at home. However, as I now found an unusual lack of words come over me, I went in with the letter in my hand. I dare say my look was very extraordinary; for he seemed not only surprised, but agitated at this unexpected visit. And he was so alarmed and confused that he did not even ask me to sit down.

"Well, sir," said I, rendered awkward by a situation so new and so embarrassing; "so you told me you were not going to be married; but I thought you were mistaken."

"How, sir! do you doubt my word?" cried he, looking so fierce that I believe he forgot he had taken orders.

"No, sir; not at all; still I am sure you are on the point of marriage."

"Absurd! I thought, sir, you must know—you must suspect—"

"I do know, I do suspect; but I also know beyond suspicion, that you are going to be married,—and to Lady Mary Lovely."

"Sir!" cried Merital, turning pale; "this cruel insult—this mockery—this trifling with my feelings, is what I did not expect from you, sir."

"You are right," cried I; "it does seem like cruel mockery, and I am an old fool;—but on my word, I cannot act more coherently now, I am so overjoyed;—but read that, and then perhaps you will forgive me."

So saying I put the letter which I had written into his hand. Happy young man! how I envied him his feelings, and how fondly I remembered, how bitterly I regretted my poor Mary!

Before he had read to the end, he exclaimed,—"This is too much, O sir!" And rushing into the other room, he closed the door on him; and it was some minutes before he returned, and seizing my hand, said, "what can I say to you, sir? How can I express my gratitude?"

"You owe me none. I have given Lady Mary to you, only to get rid of her myself."

"How, sir?"

"It is very true; she would have insisted on my marrying her, if you had not. She absolutely offered herself to me to get rid of Lord Lawless; therefore, in self-defence, I contrived to secure her marriage with you."

"You are joking, sir."

"No, I am not; I am in earnest. She thought you faithless; and, wishing to marry to avoid persecution and get from home, she wished to marry me instead of Lord Lawless."

"That I do not wonder at, sir; but I had rather she had married Lord Lawless, because *you* she might have learned to love."

Here was a compliment! And how well, in a few words, had this young man acquitted all his obligations to me!

"I thank you," said I; "but I must not stay here,—come to me to-night at Lord Vaurien's—and leave the rest to me."

I then drove home; tried to recruit in solitude and meditation my disordered spirits; and having dressed, I repaired to Lord Vaurien's to dinner.

But what a chill to my warm feelings awaited me there; Lady Mary seemed now as averse to me as to Lord Lawless, and to shrink as much from a union with me. I felt I had not deserved this, and was angry at it; and to punish her a little, and prepare her at the same time, I said, as I handed her down stairs,—"So, Mr. Merital is not going to be married?"

"So my sister tells me," she replied. And then, poor thing, her coldness was accounted for.

Still, I did not think Lady Mary used me well, as I did not provoke such coldness from her by any undue exhibition of fondness; and I blamed her perhaps too severely. Nor would I, after this, at all shorten the period of her trial and her suffering.

At nine I was told that a gentleman desired to see me; and going up to Lady Mary, I told her that as Lord and Lady Vaurien had agreed to my proposals, they and I both thought that the marriage had better take place as soon as possible.

Lady Mary now turned very pale, and replied in faltering accents, "that she saw no occasion for such haste; that some months hence, indeed——"

"Some months? Unkind Lady Mary! Do you consider my age? But perhaps you wish to take the chances of what a few months may do for me."

Lady Mary was shocked; and, conscious

she was acting ungratefully, replied, scarcely able to refrain from tears, "Well, sir, in a few weeks be it then."

"I hoped you would say days," replied I; and so said her father and mother; but Lady Mary was firm. I then said, a gentleman was waiting below whom I wished to introduce that evening, because I had resolved that he should not be to present when the day came; and I added, smiling, that if *he* was not allowed to be one of the principal people on the occasion, there should not, with my consent, be a marriage at all.

Lord and Lady Vaurien smiled, and understood me! but Lady Mary was too unhappy to notice much that I said. All she heard was, that I was going to introduce the gentleman who was to perform the marriage ceremony; and the idea of that was insupportable.

I now quitted the room, and returned with Merital. At sight of her lover, Lady Mary screamed, started forward, and then fainted in her father's arms; and I began to be sensible that I had behaved very foolishly, and sported with feelings that deserved more consideration. But Lady Mary soon recovered, and recovered to an almost insupportable sense of happiness; for all was soon explained to her; and the sight of the happiness which I had occasioned was balm of the most precious kind to my widowed heart.

To be brief. Lady Mary in a *few days* agreed to marry Merital, though she refused to marry me earlier than a *few weeks*; and thus she utterly knocked down the fabric of vanity in me which she had built up; and she continues to look, and to be so happy in her marriage, that I have in vain expected her to smooth down the ruffled plumes of my self-love, by saying,—"Oh! Mr. Trésgothic, that you would but have married me yourself!"

WHITE LIES.

Clara Delancy and Eleanor Musgrave were passing the morning together alone at the house of their guardian, with whom they resided, and were reading the last volume of an interesting book, when they were interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Somerville, a lady who came to pay them a morning visit.

"What an unfortunate interruption," said Clara, when the servant announced their visiter.

"Unfortunate indeed," replied Eleanor, "I hope she will not stay long; and I heartily wish she was at Nova Scotia."

Mrs. Somerville now entered the room, and Eleanor hastened to her with an extended hand, and assured her she was delighted to see her; but Clara simply asked how she did, and set her a chair.

"I am afraid I interrupted you," said Mrs. Somerville.

"O dear! not at all," replied Eleanor; "and if you did, we should be happy to be so interrupted."

But Clara said nothing. And the conversation fell into its usual routine of weather, gossip, dress, and the common *et cætera* of topics, when the object of the conversers is not to improve, but to kill time; for, though both Clara and Eleanor had cultivated understandings, and could talk better than most women, Mrs. Somerville was not a woman capable of calling forth their powers of mind in any way.

At last, having exhausted these usual subjects, and being come to a pause, "prophetic," as the cousins hoped, of an "end" to the visit, Mrs. Somerville said, "So, young ladies, I find Mrs. Harrison has been giving a ball?"

"A little dance rather," observed Clara.

"A dance! No, indeed," cried Eleanor, frowning aside at Clara; "it was a ball, and a very charming one it was."

"You were there then?"

"Yes, we were both there;—why were not you of the party?"

"O dear!" replied Mrs. Somerville with a sneer, and drawing up her head; "it was very unlikely Mr. and Mrs. Harrison should invite us to any of their splendid doings;—besides, if they had, we should not have gone, for we can't afford to give balls in return."

"Indeed," said Clara, "this party was neither a ball nor anything splendid."

"What can you mean, Clara, by saying so?" interrupted Eleanor; "were there not several couples dancing—the very best company the place affords;—excellent music, and an elegant supper?"

"Good company as far as it went; but I must say that it was merely a little party, got together in a hurry to celebrate the birth-day of their eldest daughter and the return of young Harrison (the Guinea-pig as they call him) from his first East India voyage; and the couples chiefly consisted of their children and their children's play-fellows. As to the supper—" "It was elegant and excellent," cried Eleanor interrupting her, "as well as the whole entertainment, call it by what name you please;—cold moor game, boar's head, goose pie, pine-apples, grapes, West India sweet-meats, champagne;—in short—"

Here Mrs. Somerville rose in violent emotion, and declared that "she wondered at the impudence of a man who was a bankrupt not six months ago, and whose certificate was not yet signed, in giving such an expensive entertainment and supper."

"Indeed, madam," said Clara, "the supper I am convinced cost them nothing; and—"

"Yes, Miss Delancy, yes, I see your good-natured motive; you wish to excuse them to me, and I know why; but Miss Musgrave has told me the truth, and— But good morning, young ladies; when my husband fails, and *seemingly* can't pay ten shillings in the pound, then *we* will give fine balls and magnificent suppers—good morning, good morning," and out of the room she hastened.

"A hateful, spiteful, envious creature," exclaimed Eleanor; "I said what I did on purpose to tease her; for I knew she was always jealous of the poor Harrisons, particularly of that charming Mrs. Harrison; and even their misfortunes could not soften her heart towards them."

"But why did you exaggerate so grossly? why did you injure them in order to tease her? You know that much of what you said was absolutely false, and all gross exaggeration."

"Nay, can you deny that there were on the table all the things which I named?"

"There were the remains of a goose pie sent from the North; the remains of a boar's head, also a present; one pine-apple, and some grapes, from their friend Sir Charles Mowbray's hot-house; and a pot of ginger, which their son brought; but the music, which you so much extolled, was the pianoforte played by Mrs. Harrison, and the tambourine by one of her daughters; and the champagne was only green gooseberry wine made at home. Yet this simple and cheap pleasure you magnified into a splendid and expensive entertainment, wholly unfitting their circumstances."

"O, never mind, as I mortified that woman; all I wish is that I had been a little more poetical in my piece."

"That is always unnecessary, for your descriptions are commonly too poetical."

"Why, what harm is there in a little exaggeration, or even in a little white lying?"

"Every harm; as '*rien n'est beau que le vrai—le vrai seul est aimable.*' Besides, when once a lie is told, who knows what the consequences may be? and the line might also be read 'nothing is safe but the truth—truth only is security.'"

"I am sure it is often very unsafe to tell the truth, and very rude too. Suppose I had told that spitfire woman she did interrupt us, and we wished she had not come?"

"That was not necessary. But it was equally unnecessary for you to tell her you were delighted to see her, and that she was an agreeable interruption."

"But what harm was there in it? and except her mortification, which is an agreeable result to me—what harm can arise from my pompous description of the Harrison's hop, alias ball?"

"I can't tell; but I believe that Mr. Somerville is Mr. Harrison's principal creditor."

"I had forgotten that," replied Eleanor, starting; "and I am sorry then I said what I did. Yes, it may do mischief."

"I wish then you would call on Mrs. Somerville, and own that your description far exceeded the truth."

"Indeed I shall own no such thing; besides, if I did, she would not believe me; you see she would not listen or believe you. But come, Clara, have done preaching, and let us resume our book."

Their book was resumed, and Mrs. Somerville was soon forgotten in the interest of the story. But Mrs. Somerville did not forget.

These young ladies were left to the care of Mr. Morley, by an old lady who bequeathed to them considerable fortunes; but left nothing to their brothers and sisters, who were by other mothers, and considerably older than they were.

The old lady also desired that their guardian's house should be their place of residence, when they were not at school, till they were five-and-twenty; when, and when only, they were to take possession of their fortune. But it was Clara's happy lot not to be forced to go to school at all; for a wise, a virtuous, a pious, and an accomplished mother, still lived to watch over her education herself, and resided with her under the roof of Mr. Morley, till a fever carried her off in the prime of life.

This gentleman was now daily expecting his nephew, Sidney Davenant, from the East Indies, where he had made a considerable property, and whence he was summoned home to take possession of still greater possessions, left him by Mr. Morley's eldest brother.

As Sidney Davenant had been brought up by his uncle, and had lived with him till he went to the East Indies, he was no stranger to his two wards; and he had left so strong and pleasing an impression on the memory of Clara Delancy, (who was two years older than Eleanor,) that she felt a degree of flutter and emotion at the idea of his return, which her excellent understanding vainly endeavoured to overcome.

Her guardian, perhaps, was one cause of this emotion, because he was fond of joking about husbands and setting caps, and indulging in that common but vulgar style of talking, which is often mischievous to weak girls, and fills their heads with lovers and coquetry, and is always offensive to the sensible and the refined.

"Well, girls! let us drink the handsome nabob!" was his usual address after dinner; "and a good husband to one of you!"

As he said this he used to wink his eye and look cunning. But Clara observed that his eye always rested on Eleanor; and she thence inferred that he concluded Davenant's choice, if he were allowed to make one, would fall on her.

"And no wonder," thought the humble Clara; "she is so very beautiful, and her manner is so lively and so winning! I can't flatter people as she does, and where I feel the most I express the least!" Clara might have added, "And her fortune is much larger than mine." But though her guardian did not leave out this recommendation while thinking over his ward's attractions, Clara was too young and too little apt to value riches, to fear Eleanor's superiority in that article.

"Pray, Clara," said Eleanor to her, one day, "how is your heart affected towards this expected nabob?"

"My heart, Eleanor,—really I—I don't exactly know. By his letters, and all we hear of him, he must be a most excellent man; and I recollect he was very fond of me, and very kind to me, when I was a child."

"And so he was to me, I dare say; but I have no recollection of him whatever; and should have forgotten there was such a person, if my guardian had not reminded me of him."

"*I* should never have forgotten him, if I had never heard his name again; and I remember that I cried bitterly when he went away."

"But you were older than I was."

"Yes, two years."

"Only two years! I thought it had been more. But, my dear, you have not yet spoken to the point; I did not ask you what you thought of this good gentleman's letter-writing and virtues; but I want to know whether you mean to 'set your cap at him,' as our guardian says; because I give you fair notice *that I do.*"

"If so, I am sure you will succeed," replied Clara, in a faint voice; "and I am too humble to enter the lists with you. But what will Captain Lethbridge say?"

"Thank you, sweet humility!" said Eleanor; "and Captain Lethbridge may say what he pleases. But remember, that if it costs your faithful heart a pang to give up your chance with this Indian Adonis, I can be generous, and withdraw my pretensions."

As she said this, she looked at herself in the glass; and she thought, and Clara too, as she gazed on her, that she had pretensions which, though withdrawn, could not but be felt and acknowledged.

And what had Clara to oppose to them? —A countenance beautiful from expression—an expression of intellect, sweetness, and of a heart devoid of guile. Truth shone on her open brow, regulated her actions, and guided her words; while an ever-varying colour enlivened the transparent whiteness of her fine and even skin; and a smile which betokened confidence and benevolence was calculated to call them forth in those who associated with her. This sunshine of the face made her presence diffuse cheerfulness wherever she appeared; and while Eleanor instantly excited unqualified admiration, Clara was as certain to excite involuntary attachment.

In personal graces they were very nearly equals; both were tall and finely formed, and both excelled in those accomplishments deemed essential to the education of young women. But Clara was the finer performer on different instruments, and the more finished singer. In things of more consequence Clara had had a considerable advantage over Eleanor. Eleanor lost her parents in childhood, and was indebted for the formation of her mind and morals wholly to a boarding-school; but Clara, as I before stated, had the benefit of a mother's watchful tenderness till she was ten years old; and that admirable parent was careful to instil into her docile and easily awakened mind, the soundest principles both of religion and morality. The sower of that good seed died, alas! before the latest seed time came. But it did come, and ripened into a plentiful harvest; and though the monitory voice was hushed, and the watchful eye closed, Clara continued to act as if the one could still admonish, and the other could still observe.

Clara was right in saying that her manners were not so popular as those of Eleanor. Eleanor, whose principles were as lax as those of persons in general; and who, whenever she wished to please, was not withheld from doing it by any regard for truth and sincerity, was always of the opinion of those with whom she conversed, especially if her companions were of that rank of life which I venture to denominate "persons of worship." She was, however, guarded by a fine understanding from making this unprincipled pliability of opinion too apparent and easy to be detected; and even when Clara was most shocked at her utter dereliction from truth, she could not but wonder at and admire the consummate skill with which she avoided all appearance of insincerity. "What charms have I," thought Clara, "to oppose to so much beauty and so much art?" whenever the wish to rival Eleanor in Davenant's admiration only too frequently got possession of her.

Clara unfortunately remembered, that Davenant had always called her *his little wife;* and once too she had overheard her mother say to Mr. Morley, "Davenant calls Clara his little wife;—Oh! could I live to see that union indeed take place, provided the man realizes the promise of the boy, I should have lived long enough." From that moment—so careful ought parents to be of what they say before children—Clara's little heart fondly cherished the image of her affectionate playfellow; especially as Davenant continued to call her his little wife even when she was grown into a tall girl, and as he wrote her a most affectionate letter on the death of her mother, whom he

idolized. Nor, spite of her judgment, could Clara help dwelling on these recollections.

"Upon my word, Clara," said Eleanor to her one day, "you blush so prettily whenever this Indian Adonis is talked of, that I suspect you are prepared to fall in love with him. Tell me, do you not suspect the same thing?"

The conscious Clara was hesitating how to answer her, when a servant came in with a note to Eleanor from Lady Sophia Mildred, the wife of a Sir Richard Mildred who lived in the neighbourhood, a lady with whom she was a very great favourite.—The note was to invite Eleanor to dine with her, *en famille;* and to say she would call for her at a certain hour.

"Tell the servant to tell his lady I will be ready at the time she mentions," said Eleanor. Then, forgetting her question to Clara remained unanswered, she, to Clara's great relief, left the room to prepare for Lady Sophia.

This lady's booby son, the heir of Sir Richard Mildred, an ancient and wealthy baronet, was under the care of a very respectable man, who took eight young gentlemen to educate; and who did his duty too strictly by them to be a favourite with a weak, unprincipled mother, like Lady Sophia Mildred.

Accordingly she used every method to disgust Sir Richard with Mr. Bellamy's mode of tuition; she accused him of severity in his treatment of her son, and declared that she should never be easy while her darling Augustus was under the dominion of such a tyrant. But she talked in vain; Sir Richard found that the boy, spite of his idleness, advanced in his learning, and he knew Lady Sophia's weakness too well to be influenced by her representations.

In the sympathizing bosom of Eleanor this lady was in the habit of depositing her conjugal griefs; for Sir Richard's obstinacy and ill humour were never-failing topics with her; and the poor boy's sufferings at school were always the climax of the distress; and this invitation to dinner just received, was, Eleanor knew, the consequence of her having some new grief to impart to her.

Lady Sophia arrived at the appointed time, and in their way home the fond mother could not forbear calling to see her petted child. But she arrived at an unlucky moment; for through the open window she saw Mr. Bellamy in the act of dragging her son by his arm into the middle of the room, while the face of her beautiful Augustus was red and swelled, and his hair in great disorder.

"A wretch! a ruffian!" screamed out Lady Sophia, "he will kill the child, I know he will!" And into the school-room rushed Lady Sophia, followed by Eleanor, who saw what her ladyship saw, but did not draw the same conclusions.

At sight of his mother, the angry boy burst from his preceptor's hand and flew to her, sobbing and speechless with resentment and the desire of vengeance; while his mother clasped him to her bosom, and called him her "dear injured child."

Eleanor, meanwhile, was looking at another boy, adown whose cheek the blood was streaming from a wound in the ear, and who had likewise been dragged like a culprit into the middle of the room; while Mr. Bellamy —who till now stood in calm and dignified silence waiting to be interrogated by Lady Sophia—replied to Eleanor's question of "How did this young gentleman hurt his ear?" "Master Mildred bit it, Miss Musgrave."

On hearing this, the amiable Augustus kicked and stamped and roared aloud; and Lady Sophia being afraid her darling should go into fits, took him into another room, where there should be nothing to wound his sight or his hearing, and requested Eleanor to follow.

When there, she desired her darling to tell her what had occasioned the violence which his master was using to him when she drove up to the door. And at last she gathered from him, that he and Master Felton had been quarrelling; and that, as usual, old Bellamy had blamed him, and was going to punish him when she appeared.

"But he *had* punished you, the brute!" said the enraged Lady Sophia; "for I declare your cheek is swelled with a blow from his clumsy hand. And here are all the marks of his odious fingers."

"And see," said the boy, "where my hair is pulled off my head!"

Lady Sophia did look, and saw that his hair had indeed been pulled off; and declared she would take him home with her, and he should never return to the brute again; for now Sir Richard would be convinced with his own eyes how old Bellamy treated her darling. "And you, Miss Musgrave," she added, "are my witness of this violence."

"I did not see Mr. Bellamy strike Master Mildred, madam."

"No, but you see very recent proofs of his having struck him; and you saw him drag him into the middle of the room."

"Yes, but not by the hair of his head."

"O yes you did, I am sure I saw him; and only see how much hair is pulled off."

"But not surely by Mr. Bellamy. Master Mildred does not say he did it."

"If he did not, who should, Miss Musgrave? and such a wretch shall no longer torture my darling—shall he, Augustus?"

"Not IF he did this, madam."

"*If* he did this! Did he not do it, Augustus? Miss Musgrave, you see, does not believe it."

"Why, yes," said the boy sullenly, who found his removal from school depended on the establishment of this fact; "and she is naughty to say he did not." So saying he

stuck out his elbow at Eleanor, who was silenced but not convinced. And Lady Sophia told her, "that the greatest proof of friendship which she could give her, would be to bear her testimony to the truth of old Bellamy's treatment of her son, of which he must know she was an eye-witness; for," added Lady Sophia, "Sir Richard would not believe me, and would say it was only my misrepresentation in order to get my angel boy home again. So, my dear friend, all my hopes of peace of mind depend on you, for Sir Richard always doubts the truth of what I say."

"What a disgraceful confession," thought Eleanor, "for a wife to make!" And she began to believe that Clara was right in the great value which she set on habitual truth-telling, even in trifles.

The amiable Augustus being now pacified, Lady Sophia, leading him by the hand, sailed into the room with all the dignity of conscious rank, and told Mr. Bellamy that she should take her son home with her that moment, and that she should do her utmost to prevent Sir Richard's ever sending him back to a place where he was so ill-treated.

"If you succeed, madam," replied Mr. Bellamy with a manner as proud and cold as her own, "you will do me a great favour, for you will rid me of the most troublesome pupil I ever had, and I heartily wish your ladyship success." He then went to call up her carriage.

"Fine airs old Bellamy gives himself!" cried Lady Sophia; "but I don't believe him, do you?"

Eleanor did not answer, for she did believe him; but she could scarcely attend to what she said; for she was amusing herself with watching the looks mutually exchanged between the boy with the bitten ear and the amiable Augustus; and they reminded her, in sweetness of expression, of that of two cats threatening each other on a house top; and Eleanor could not help suspecting that the bitten ear was either the consequence or the cause of the loss of hair on Master Mildred's head, and the blow on his face. But Lady Sophia and Augustus were resolved "Old Bellamy" (as they called in scorn a fine man of six-and-thirty) should be the nominal delinquent; and Eleanor did not see how she could avoid saying the same. The carriage came round; the young adversaries looked and grinned their last defiance; and Lady Sophia, her precious child, and Eleanor drove off.

Sir Richard Mildred was a man of whom all his family stood in awe, and especially his lady-wife; though she, in her turn, made others afraid of her. And as fear is the most common cause of lying, vanity excepted—that little lying known by the name of white lying—Lady Sophia, to screen herself from Sir Richard's awful frowns, and biting sarcasms, had had so often recourse to the shield of a lie or a subterfuge, that she was right in saying he never believed what she said; and now that he saw her return bringing Augustus with her, though it was a holiday, he was prepared to disbelieve whatever excuse she might make for this, as he thought it, improper indulgence.

Lady Sophia as soon as she saw him beheld the gathering storm on his brow; and trembling habitually at the sight, (however bold she was in her conviction of being right for once) she was so hurried and so obscure in her mode of narrating the injuries of her darling boy, that Sir Richard declared his inability to understand her; then, assuring him Miss Musgrave had seen all she saw, and would vouch for the truth of all she said, she began her story over again; and ended it by showing the impoverished hair and the marked cheek in evidence of old Bellamy's cruelty.

"Old Bellamy, madam! Call a man of his years *old?*"

"It is wrong, I know; but Augustus calls him so."

"Then Augustus ought to be flogged out of such impertinence. But let me understand you; do you mean to tell me such marks of brutal violence were inflicted by Mr. Bellamy on my son Augustus Mildred?"

"I do; and Miss Musgrave will tell you the same,—will you not? Did you not see old Mr. Bellamy drag Augustus by the hair of the head into the middle of the room?"

"Certainly, madam, I saw him drag him into the middle of the room."

"And by the hair of the head."

Lady Sophia cast a piteous imploring look at Eleanor; and she answered "Yes I did.—And," said she evasively, "the marks of the blow on the cheek, though now nearly effaced, were quite visible."

"I am shocked and amazed, Lady Sophia; and but for this young lady's testimony I could not have believed this story; but as she says it is so, I shall write to Mr. Bellamy, and tell him that cruelty being not only my aversion, but, in my opinion, a very bad mode of teaching, I shall not allow Augustus to return to his house, but shall send him to a more mild preceptor."

Sir Richard then left the room to write his intentions to Mr. Bellamy. And Lady Sophia thanked her friend again and again for the great service which she had rendered her and her son, and declared that she would never forget it.

But all Lady Sophia's thanks and caresses were impotent to reconcile Eleanor at once to herself. She knew that she had violated the truth, and that in so doing she had been the means of injuring a man whom she esteemed, in order to gratify a woman whom she despised; nor could she help feeling that this was the situation which Clara had often anticipated.

"Who," said Clara, "can be sure, if that

restrictive principle is once broken down, which forbids all violations of truth, as odious to the God of truth, and as contemptible as well as mischievous in the eyes of man,—who can say that if they once admit their right to judge when truth is to be told and when it is not, that they shall not be led from the commission of what they choose to call innocent lies, into that of malignant and injurious ones, by the influence of strong temptation?"

For Eleanor, that fatal time was now arrived; and she had told an injurious lie; for though the loss of the pupil was, in one sense, a benefit rather than an injury to Mr. Bellamy, still she had injured him in Sir Richard's esteem, and made him appear guilty of a fault of which he was incapable. However, it was too late to repent or retrace her steps; and all she had now to hope was, that no more inquiries would take place; and she anxiously awaited Mr. Bellamy's reply to Sir Richard's note. It came in the evening, and simply stated that Mr. Bellamy was sorry Sir Richard disapproved of his manner of treating Master Mildred; but that, as his conscience did not reproach him with undue severity, he should soon reconcile himself to the loss of a very troublesome pupil.

Mr. Bellamy was a proud man; he was a man of a good family, and once a man of fortune; but circumstances had deprived him of the latter, and his pride had not fallen with his fortunes.

Sir Richard had always treated him with that respect with which a real gentleman treats another, however reduced in situation; but his feelings had been frequently wounded by the ignorant pride of Lady Sophia; and the note which he wrote to Sir Richard, though written to him, was meant at her.

Eleanor enjoyed the reply; not only because she entered into Mr. Bellamy's wrongs, and was grieved to have assisted in inflicting them; but because it utterly precluded all inquiry into the merits of the case, and secured her therefore from detection; for, in spite of her compunctious feelings, she too much resembled Fag the footman, in the play of the Rivals, who says to his master, "for though, sir, I do not scruple telling a lie to serve a friend, it *hurts one's conscience terribly* to be *found out*." And Fag, I believe, speaks the opinion of most persons, as a strict regard to truth is the rarest of all virtues.

In the evening, Mr. Morley sent his coach for Eleanor; and as she drove past the house of Mr. Bellamy, and received a kind bow from him from the window, her heart smote her very painfully. "How ashamed I shall be to see him again, poor man!" involuntarily burst from her lips. "But I will take care not to see him again for many months," she said to herself as the coach stopped at her guardian's door;—and she knew that this purpose might easily be effected.

Eleanor was usually so communicative on her return from a visit at Sir Richard's, and used to give so ludicrous a description of the baronet's frowns and Lady Sophia's fears, that Mr. Morley was quite disappointed at not receiving his accustomed treat; and seeing her unusual gravity and disinclination to talk, he asked her if she was not well; and she assured him she had a bad head-ache.

Accordingly, to keep up this deception, she took up her candle and went to her room, whither Clara kindly followed her; and, suspecting that her mind was more diseased than her body, she lingered in her apartment some time, in order to give her an opportunity of unburthening her feelings; but in vain. Eleanor dared not reveal to her the cause of her uncomfortableness, and Clara was too delicate to notice it.

The next morning Mrs. Bellamy called; but luckily for Eleanor, not till both Mr. Morley and Clara were gone out. Eleanor, therefore, had only to desire the servants to utter the usual lie, that she was not at home, in order to avoid the disagreeable interrogatories, and an unwelcome visiter.

Clara was gone on an errand of kindness to a cottage at a distance, and on her return she met Sir Richard and Lady Sophia; the former of whom, who had been to pay a morning visit with his lady, insisted on her taking his other arm, and assured her that he and Lady Sophia would see her home.

Lady Sophia instantly began on the subject of her grievances, and said, "I conclude Miss Musgrave told you all that happened yesterday?"

"No; she was unusually silent on her return, and told us nothing."

"How strange! then I will." And Lady Sophia entered into a copious detail of what had passed, mixing truth and mere assertion together so artfully, that Clara was quite at a loss to discover where the one ended and the other began, though she was very sure there was falsehood somewhere.

"And can this really be all true?" asked Clara, with an incredulous look.

"True! to be sure it is—could I doubt the evidence of my own senses, think you?"

"Indeed, madam," replied Clara, "on such an occasion I should almost have doubted the evidence of mine. Mr. Bellamy, that excellent and fine-tempered man, guilty of an act of violence and cruelty like this! I do not know how to believe it."

"Nor did *I*, Miss Delancy," said Sir Richard, "till your cousin Miss Musgrave declared that she witnessed it; and I considered her testimony as unimpeachable."

"That is more than I do," thought Clara, while consternation and painful suspicion kept her silent.

"But, dear sir," said Clara, recovering herself, "surely for one act of improper violence, committed in a passion, and I dare say heartily repented of, you will not lend your aid to abridge the few comforts of this much-tried family! surely you will relent, and let Master Mildred go to Mr. Bellamy again!" While she thus spoke, Clara was resolutely regardless of all Lady Sophia's frowns and winks; and she anxiously awaited Sir Richard's answer, which was as follows: "Impossible! my dear Miss Delancy; the fiat is gone forth; the decree is registered; and I thought you had known that my decrees, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, are unchangeable, and particularly unchangeable by the persuasions and representations of a woman."

"But surely if Lady Sophia would condescend to feel for poor Mr. Bellamy, and try to persuade you, sir——"

"Lady Sophia try to persuade me! Let me tell you, Miss Delancy, the greatest proof of understanding which I ever witnessed in that lady is, her never presuming to try to change a resolution of mine. *Verbum sapienti*, Miss Delancy, or 'A word to the wise.'" Clara bowed, to show that she understood the application; and having reached her own door, she was very glad that they refused her invitation to walk in, as she was impatient to interrogate Eleanor alone.

She found Eleanor in her dressing-room, and proceeded at once to discuss the subject with her; but she obtained from her very little that was satisfactory. She owned, indeed, that Lady Sophia had exaggerated a little, and she also; but that she was convinced it was for the best, and that Mr. Bellamy was not a proper person to have the care of Augustus Mildred.

"And are you prepared to say this to the Bellamys?"

"No;—I do not mean to say any thing to them; I don't mean to see them; and I was denied to Mrs. Bellamy this morning."

"But you must meet some time or other."

"Not till this affair is forgotten; as we are going to London, you know, for some months, and set off the day after the next."

"And can you bear to go away without taking leave of these amiable people? They will think that you give them up out of compliment to the Mildreds, whom Mr. Bellamy has offended; and it was Mr. Davenant, remember, who recommended Mr. Bellamy to our guardian, he having known him in India."

"O dear! I had forgotten that," cried Eleanor.—"Well, I can't help it now; and the Bellamys must think what they please. If I saw them I know I should be tempted to tell a great many fibs; therefore, as a lover of truth, you, you know, can no longer tease me to see them now. And if what we hear is true, the Bellamys will have left their present abode and be gone to live in Surrey before we return."

"Well, I will say no more," said Clara; "for I know that seeing them would be putting you in a situation of temptation. Therefore you must take the consequence, and be contented to be thought guilty of a meanness foreign to your nature, because you have yielded to one only too analogous to it."

"You are severe, Miss Delancy."

"Perhaps I am so. But my feelings have been greatly hurt; as I love you too well, Eleanor, to witness any fault in you without considerable pain."

"I am not so generous as you," returned Eleanor; "for I am very glad when you err; as it is rather trying to one's self-love to have one's friend's morality mounted so much higher than one's own. It is as disagreeable as it would be to be forced to walk arm in arm with a giant whom one can only reach on tiptoe."

Eleanor kept her resolution, and avoided a rencontre with the Bellamys. Clara, however, called on them, and was not sorry to find them out; as by this means she too avoided questions which she would have found it difficult to answer. And, as it was originally fixed, they set off the next day for London, where Mr. Morley had hired the same ready-furnished house which he had the preceding year; and where he was now anxiously and hourly expecting the arrival of his nephew.

Nor did he fail to arrive a day or two after they were settled in London; and he took up his abode at a hotel near his uncle's house.

The first moments of such arrivals are usually moments of hurry, of flutter, and of indistinct vision, and the intensity of feeling on such occasions makes its very existence appear equivocal.

Sidney Davenant felt considerable emotion at seeing the beloved uncle whom he had left in the prime of his existence, now changed into an elderly, though healthy-looking, man. And the consciousness that he must keep this feeling concealed, threw a restraint over his manner resembling coldness. While his uncle, on beholding the graceful and fair youth of twenty-one matured into a sun-burnt man of large proportions and of dignified appearance, could not welcome him with the familiarity of old times; but received him with embarrassed emotion, and grasped his extended hand in silence.

His wards, whom their guardian was too full at heart to name, curtsied, smiled, and did not speak. But Clara's eyes were ready to overflow with tears, as she recollected her mother, and recollected also, that as she loved Davenant dearly, she used to call him her son. The tears, and the eyes that shed them, instantly recalled to him the moment when he bade Mrs. Delancy adieu! and when her soft blue eyes glistened like those before him.

"I cannot be mistaken," said he, with a faltering voice, "you are so like HER—you are,—you must be CLARA! So looked your dear mother," he added, after having saluted her glowing cheek, "when I bade her farewell. Ah! these are the trials that make parting and absence so terrible, and cloud over the moments of one's return!" And Davenant, as he said this, turned in evident agitation to the window.

Clara also turned away and left the room, to shed no unpleasing tears to the memory of her mother.

"And who is this, my dear sir?" said he, recovering himself, and gazing on Eleanor with evident admiration. "Can this tall, proper, young lady be that little dark-eyed torment who used to pull your pig-tail, and do sundry tricks of the sort?"

"Yes, indeed, she is," said Morley, recovering his speech; "and she is a dark-eyed torment still, the men say."

"I can easily believe that," replied Davenant kissing her hand repeatedly. And Eleanor was flattered that he had not saluted her cheek.

"It is evident," said she mentally, "that he met Clara with a brother's feelings." And her bright eye grew brighter while she thought thus.

When Clara returned, Davenant took her hand and drew her next him on the sofa, where he had seated himself by the side of Eleanor.

"You remind me strongly of your mother," said he, after gazing on her some time with an expression of affectionate pleasure. "And you could not resemble a more admirable woman; I loved her most dearly!"

"And very likely you will love Clara dearly," observed Morley, laughing.

"Very likely," replied Davenant, sighing. "I owed Mrs. Delancy many obligations for good advice and kind care; and for her dear sake, I should be inclined to love a far less loveable object than the one before me."

Poor Clara, though she would have been sorry and disappointed if Davenant had not felt thus towards her lost parent, and had not spoken as he did, was not satisfied; for he seemed to talk of loving her merely for her mother's sake. And alas! she feared that it would not be difficult for her to love *him* for *his own!*

"I used to call your mother MY mother, Clara," continued he.

"And I conclude," said Eleanor, "you called Clara your sister, did you not?"

"No," he replied rather archly, "I was more presumptuous—I called her my little wife."

"And did she call you her big husband?"

"No, she did not honour me so far," returned he, looking at Clara, who blushed so deeply, and looked so uncomfortable, that he averted his eyes immediately.

"And pray," said Eleanor, with one of her bewitching smiles, "do you remember what you called me?"

"No, I do not," he replied, looking up in her face with an expression of warm admiration. "No, I do not recollect; but I dare say the name was an appropriate one—Troublesome urchin! Teasing animal! Little torment! or something of the sort;—and now, perhaps, I shall have reason, like other men, to call you a great torment."

"I shall certainly try to make you prove your words," replied Eleanor, smiling and blushing. "For now you have piqued me to the undertaking."

"Piqued you!—have I piqued you already?" returned Davenant, gayly. "O welcome sound! What would not the unfortunate men to whom my uncle alluded, give to have brought you to such a confession?"

"I am wholly unconscious," replied Eleanor, with a degree of confusion which became her infinitely, "of the force of what I said; and I beg you to believe that I spoke ignorantly, if improperly."

"The fault is wholly mine, if fault there be," replied Davenant, respectfully; "and I feel that I have presumed too much on so short a renewal of acquaintance; but you must make allowances for an intoxicated man; for intoxicated I am, to find myself after a tedious voyage restored to the society of a most dear relation, and to that of——— But I will not presume to say all I think of the present company." Then taking a hand of each of the fair cousins, he pressed them gracefully to his lips, and telling his uncle he wished to speak to him, took him into another apartment.

"I wonder," said Eleanor, going to the glass on pretence of adjusting her hair, "what the handsome Indian will say of us to his uncle, and what questions he will ask?"

"Perhaps he will not even name us," replied Clara.

"But do you think that likely?"

"No, I do not;—it is most likely that he will mention us."

"I wonder whether he will inquire into the state of our affections?"

"If he is interested in it, I conclude that he will."

"If he is interested!—he must be interested in that of his sister Clara; for he seems already to consider you as such."

Clara felt that this inference was only too like the truth; and she was hesitating how to answer, when the gentlemen returned for a moment in search of a box of papers, and withdrew again; on which Clara left the room.

Eleanor was right: Davenant had questioned his uncle respecting his fair wards; and had heard from him nothing but expressions of unqualified admiration.

But he had *not* inquired, as yet, into the

state of their affections; and in business they passed the time, till they were summoned at half-past six to the dinner-table.

The cousins, meanwhile, had thought their absence long; but Eleanor had been the most displeased at it. She had been used to make sudden and violent impressions, from the brilliant style of her beauty; and she had flattered herself that Davenant had been too much charmed with her to have willingly absented himself so long from her presence.

Clara had feared the same. But her mind was relieved, when on returning into the drawing-room after an absence, as she thought, of some length, she still found Eleanor alone; and this circumstance, which mortified Eleanor, gave her pleasure, by proving her friend's fascination less than she had imagined it.—Going therefore immediately from pensive silence into renewed spirits, she began to talk incessantly; and she related many anecdotes of her childhood, of which Davenant was the hero.

"I should have known Mr. Davenant wherever I had seen him," said Clara, "spite of his Indian complexion and increased age."

"I have not the slightest recollection of him, whatever," replied Eleanor.

"How strange! though you were nine years old when he went away."

"Yes, but I was only with my guardian during the holidays."

"Still he used to play with us both a great deal and give us pretty things. When he went away, I remember, he gave me a little coral necklace and bracelets; and after he was gone, you were so mortified because he did not give you the same, and cried so much, that my mother allowed me to give you the necklace."

"Oh! I remember it now; but I have not seen it for years. However, I dare say I have it somewhere."

"On the contrary, I have always treasured up the bracelets for the sake of the giver, with the greatest care; though I cannot wear them because they are too small for me now."

"Sentimental creature!"

At this moment the gentlemen obeyed the summons to dinner.

Davenant was so pleased with his companions, that, spite of the fatigue of his journey, and spite of the cares of business, it was long after the midnight hour before he tore himself away.

He slept and dreamed of Eleanor; but when he awoke he saw the soft blue eyes of Clara swimming in tears at the recollection of the mother whom she had lost, and recalling to his mind, in all her gentle loveliness, that mother whom these tears deplored.

He found Eleanor alone when he went to his uncle's to breakfast; and she told him she had been impatiently expecting him. The breakfast-room opened into another room which Clara, unseen, had entered; and as the folding doors were open, she heard all that passed, while she was filling the tea chest with fresh tea and sugar.

"I cannot but look at you with wonder, as well as admiration," said Davenant, "to think that you are the little pale meagre urchin whom I left twelve years ago; and no doubt I appear to you as much altered, though not for the better as you are."

"No, not at all," replied Eleanor; "you are not at all altered, and I should have known you anywhere."

"Indeed!" replied Davenant, pleased and flattered by the declaration; "I am glad I made such an impression on your young heart."

Eleanor, who was not conscious of even a growing love to this amiable man, was enabled by indifference to reply without any emotion to this observation, and would have done so, had she not looked up and beheld Clara, who with a look and gesture of reproach was standing behind Davenant's chair.

Spite of her habitual disregard of truth, Eleanor could not but feel humbled at the conviction that Clara had overheard the falsehood which she had just uttered. This consciousness covered her cheek with blushes, and cast down her eyes in confusion; while Davenant, attributing her embarrassment to what he had said, was deceived and flattered by it.

Clara now came forward, her fair cheek mantling as she welcomed Davenant, and felt the affectionate pressure of his hand. Mr. Morley followed in all the florid health of green old age; and Davenant, as he cast his eyes on the blooming girls and on his blooming uncle, and then looked in the glass, declared that he was ashamed to show his yellow face amongst them.

"Yellow face!" cried Eleanor; "brown you mean; rather the hue of manhood than of illness."

"The hue of age and climate, you ought to say; the tint of bilious tendency."

"No, indeed, I do not; I am sure I should never suspect from your complexion that you came from India; but I should only conclude you had been somewhere or other exposed to a burning sun."

"You flatter me."

"O dear, no! I speak what I think;—Clara, is it not so? Should you know from Mr. Davenant's appearance that he came from India—and is he at all yellow-looking?"

Clara, who had seen Davenant's eyes sparkle at being assured that he looked much healthier than he felt, was confounded at the necessity under which Eleanor had placed her, of either telling a falsehood or of wounding the feelings of Davenant; but it was impossible for her really to hesitate a moment, and she replied in a faint voice—"As beauty of complexion is of no consequence to a man, I hope I shall not hurt Mr. Davenant by owning that he does, in my eyes, look as if he

came from India, and that he is rather yellow."

Used as Eleanor was to Clara's rigid adherence to truth in general, she always thought, like all persons who never act on principle themselves, that Clara would fib like her neighbours, when any strong temptation was held out to her. And knowing that the fear of giving Mr. Davenant pain, and the wish of giving him pleasure, were at this moment uppermost in Clara's mind, she expected—being unable to conceive the virtue which she had not—that Clara would join her in flattering the yellow nabob on his fair looks.

But though she keenly felt the moral superiority of her cousin, she was agreeably surprised in one respect at Clara's honesty; as she saw that it would enable her, by similar questions, to make Clara at any time mortify the self-love of Davenant.

Mr. Morley, who had listened in silence to this discussion on complexion, was even more surprised at Eleanor's effrontery in admiring that of his nephew, than at Clara's boldness in telling the truth. And before Davenant could speak, after Clara's specimen of unyielding veracity, the old gentleman exclaimed —"Upon my word, Sidney, I am glad to find you are not in any danger of being spoiled here; for I see the harm Eleanor might do you by her flattery, Clara will counteract by her sincerity."

"My *flattery*, sir, I assure you, is no flattery; and I mean what I say as much as Clara does."

"Well, my dear, all this may be very true; for there is such a thing, I am told, as 'love at first sight;' and love is blind; so I am prepared now to hear you exclaim, in the words of the poet, altered for the occasion,

> 'Yellow he's not, or I no yellow spy;
> He is all beauty, or all blindness I.'"

And Eleanor, a little abashed by this deserved rebuke of her guardian, was absolutely shamed into silence.

Davenant meanwhile felt rather foolish. He was conscious that Eleanor's expressed opinion had given him pleasure, and that Clara's had mortified him; and he was ashamed of the weakness into which his vanity had betrayed him. But if Eleanor really was blinded by growing partiality for him, that idea was indeed delightful.—"Yet, coxcomb that I am," thought Davenant the next moment; "how is it possible I can believe such nonsense? Can I be so contemptibly vain as to fancy that like Cæsar, I came—I saw—I conquered?" And every one of the party had eaten an egg before the silence of the breakfast-table was again broken.

It was broken first by Morley, who sung, or rather tried to sing, the first lines of

> "Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
> Or days of lang syne—"

"Sidney," said he, "one of the girls must sing that to you; it is appropriate to your return."

"You sing then?—do you?"

"Yes," said Clara.

"Yes, a little," replied Eleanor.

"And do you play?"

"Yes," said Eleanor, "I play the pianoforte and the harp a little."

"O yes! I knew it must be a little—*C'est le mot pour dire*—a lady's little on such occasions is simply said for modesty's sake. And you, Miss Delancy, do you play a little?"

"No, I play a great deal, on the harp, the guitar, and piano-forte."

"My dear nephew, you don't know Clara, or you would know that she never says anything for modesty's sake, or any sake but that of truth;—she is the most scrupulous little person in the creation; and I really believe that if her life depended on telling even a white lie, she would not utter it."

There was an expression in Davenant's countenance when Morley said this, which well repaid Clara for the pain which she had felt in being forced to tell a probably unwelcome truth to him. For a moment he looked at her in silence.

"How I honour and admire such scruples, as you call them! How rare and how precious they are! I have been living so long amongst the most lying nation in the world, that truth is even more delightful to me than ever."

Eleanor instantly took the hint, and told a few fibs to proclaim the devotedness of her admiration of a virtue which in reality she despised, at least in trifles; but she spoke with such hurry and such vehemence, and so devoid of that tone of sincerity which comes from the heart, and which no art can imitate, that if Davenant had been of a suspicious nature, he must have seen that she was speaking a language unusual to her.

It was not long before Davenant, who was very fond of music, became urgent to hear the friends sing and play; and his disappointment in hearing Clara was very great. Eleanor, who felt no emotion, was perfectly mistress of her voice, and sang her best; but poor Clara, who earnestly wished to shine, and was always only too distrustful of her own powers, was so hoarse from alarm and feeling, that she appeared to great disadvantage; and Davenant could not help remarking to Eleanor, when Clara had left the room, that he was sorry he had urged Miss Delancy to sing, for he found by her hoarseness she had a bad cold though she did not say so.

"She is always rather hoarse," replied Eleanor carelessly; nor did she much misrepresent; for, as Clara seldom sang at her ease, she was usually hoarse; though Eleanor knew that when in voice and in courage her

friend's singing was infinitely superior to her own.

Time went on, and saw Mr. Davenant every day the guest of his uncle and every evening attending the fair cousins, and their *chaperone* to parties and places of amusement; and while Clara, conscious that he was becoming daily dearer to her heart, was rendered, spite of her ingenousness, increasingly cold and reserved in Davenant's presence, by that timid delicacy which shrinks from testifying an unsolicited preference, Eleanor, whose tender feelings were not engaged in the contest, and who was restrained by no such delicacy of sentiment, expressed more regard for Davenant than she really felt, and gratified his self-love by the warmth of her manner, as much as Clara wounded it by the coldness of hers, till at length he was disposed to put on the silken chains which Eleanor tendered to him, though both his judgment and taste led him to prefer Clara Delancy.

As Eleanor found that Davenant was pleased with the idea of having been always remembered with pleasure by his young companions, she used to relate to him, when they were alone, circumstances that had passed before he went abroad, which the unsuspicious Clara had repeated to her of herself and Davenant, and of her feelings towards this friend and playfellow. But Eleanor used to relate them of *herself* and *him*. And while Davenant could not but admire these proofs of early sensibility and infantine gratitude, he used to sigh as he reflected on Clara's apparent want of these affectionate recollections and proofs of grateful attachment.

"*She* never reminded me," said he mentally, "of past scenes and past kindnesses; yet I loved her and did not care much for Eleanor. But perhaps she has an attachment, and I will inquire of my uncle."

Clara one day, while arranging her work-basket, let fall a small box, which, opening as it fell, disclosed a pair of coral bracelets. "Do you remember these?" said she to Davenant, who was alone with her.

"I think I do."

"You gave them to me when you went to India."

"And was there not a necklace also?"

"There was," replied Clara blushing, "but I gave it away."

"Gave it away!" echoed Davenant.

"Yes, it was begged of me, and—"

"You could not refuse it, certainly, Miss Delancy; for I conclude the pleader was *eloquent*."

"Very, it was—"

Here some company entered, and the subject was dropt and never resumed.

A few days after, Eleanor having found by chance the long forgotten coral necklace, which the good-nature of Clara had induced her to yield to her tears and entreaties, resolved to make a merit of having preserved it with the unsuspecting Davenant; and when she was alone with him one day, she showed him this necklace, which she said, was a *gift of his*.

"Indeed!" said he; "I do not remember giving you a necklace; I gave one to Clara, and a pair of bracelets—the necklace she gave away; and she was going to tell me to whom, when we were interrupted."

This speech made Eleanor fear her falsehood might be detected; but recovering herself she said with ready art, "yes, she gave it to me; for, thinking she did not much value it, as it was become too small for her to wear, I begged it of her to give a little girl. This necklace nothing would have tempted me to part with, as it was your gift to myself, you know."

"Thank you, thank you! kind girl," said Davenant. "For my part," added he in a tone of pique, "I wonder Clara kept even the bracelets."

"You forget," said Eleanor, "that Clara was old enough to know that you might remember that you had given her them, and might on your return expect to see them;—you know she was some years my senior?"

"Some years!"

"Yes."

"I had forgotten that," replied Davenant; "then she was indeed old enough to value the gift of a friend;—but she must have been very little for her age."

When Davenant was alone with his uncle a day or two after this conversation, he said to him with some emotion, "give me leave to ask you, sir, whether the affections of your fair wards are disengaged?"

"Eleanor's were, certainly, when you first came from India, Sidney; but now I am pretty sure they are not," he replied with a significant smile.

Davenant blushed, and perhaps looked pleased; but with some embarrassment he said, "And Miss Delancy, sir, is *her* heart her own still?" And as his alarmed uncle surveyed him with a very inquisitive glance, he coloured and went to the window.

"So, so!" thought the cautious and money-loving old man, "I will soon put a stop to this folly.—Why, *no*, if I had not before suspected, nay, known, that Clara had an attachment, I should have been sure of it now," he replied; "for really, Sidney, you are such an agreeable creature, that nothing, I think, could have preserved Clara's heart from your fascinations, but a prior attachment."

"You flatter me, sir. Then Miss Delancy is attached, is engaged, is she, sir?"

"Yes, I may venture to say, yes; and to a poor lieutenant, in a marching regiment, of the name of Beaumont. A fine, handsome young fellow he is, to be sure; and Clara prevailed on me to give him the run of my house

when he was quartered near us. I thought at first it was from pure benevolence, because the youth was said to be lowly born, and no one noticed him; and it was very like Clara to notice those whom others look down upon; —but other persons were not so candid as I was."

"And are you sure, sir, it was more than pure benevolence, after all?"

"Yes—I am sure;—not that she ever named him to me, or gave me any hint of the business, because she knew I would not consent. But she will be of age in two years, and it is no great time to wait; and in the meanwhile he calls here whenever he comes to London, and I know they correspond."

"Ah, then it is so—I see it is so!—and what I fancied coldness towards myself, was only principle and propriety of feeling," exclaimed Davenant. "Sir," added he in a faltering voice, "the poor lieutenant is, in my eyes, a rich and enviable man."

So saying, he quitted the room, leaving his uncle rejoiced that by a little white lying he had prevented his nephew from indulging a romantic preference for one of his wards, and probably secured his addressing the other, as he thought that Eleanor, with fifty thousand pounds, was a much better match for his nephew than Clara with only thirty.

"And after all," thought he, "I have only declared sure and undoubted, what I have reason to suspect is a positive fact. It is true, Clara did tell me that she had no thought of marrying Beaumont, though she had a great regard for him. But then on such subjects, all women fancy themselves privileged to lie—ay, even a Clara Delancy."

Still, he did not feel quite satisfied with himself when he made this assertion, nor was he sure that he had done right in not acquainting Davenant with Clara's declaration on this subject. "Yet, after all," said he to himself, "there is no harm in telling a white lie to serve a friend, nor in a little mental reservation; and Clara," added he, with a feeling of conscious pique and perhaps of painful inferiority, "Clara is so troublesome with her scrupulosity sometimes, that I think Sidney will be happier with Eleanor."

When Davenant left his uncle, he returned to his lodgings to hold a last parley, as it were, with his heart, and endeavour to find out whether it was too full of the image of Clara Delancy, to allow him to pay his addresses to Eleanor Musgrave? a step which he saw his uncle wished, and he feared that Eleanor not only wished but expected from him.

Davenant had returned to England, disposed to fall in love with Clara Delancy; for though her mother was some years older than himself, he had loved her with all the ardour of a boy's first passion. Still he had had resolution to leave England without disclosing his attachment to its object; as he knew that a woman of her well-regulated feelings was not likely to return it; and that such a disclosure would only serve to check that kind confidence, and that expression of even maternal affection, which the unconscious Mrs. Delancy expressed towards him.

But her image accompanied him to India, and was probably a sort of guardian angel to his steps; for the dread of lowering his character in the esteem of Mrs. Delancy was unconsciously to himself a frequent restraint on him in moments of temptation to evil; while the wish to deserve her good opinion was an excitement with him to virtuous enterprise; and "O, that *she* had been some years *younger*, or *I* some years *older!*" was the wish of his youthful heart; while he soon after used to recollect with pleasure that Mrs. Delancy had a daughter, and that daughter promised to be like her mother.

Time in the meanwhile passed away, and he was returned to England still young enough to be the lover of Mrs. Delancy's daughter; he had found her too the image of her mother, and, barring a little coldness, not more like her in person than in mind;—but she, he was told, loved, and was engaged to another! therefore he must try to forget those prospects long so fondly cherished, and devote to one, who seemed to be already disposed to devote hers to him, those affections which he now felt were only too much at the disposal of Clara Delancy.

"Yes, yes," said he to himself, "I must cease to think of Clara, and learn to think only of Eleanor. But I do not think I am bound to woo Eleanor seriously yet. No—not yet;" and he resolved not to be rash in his proceedings.

That day Mr. Morley received a letter from the country, in which amongst other news he learned that Mr. Bellamy had removed into Surrey; and that Mr. Harrison, finding that Mr. Somerville and his other creditors positively refused to sign his certificate, by which means he was prevented accepting a share which was offered him in a lucrative business, had left the town with his wife and all his family, and was removed no one knew whither, for he had not been heard of since his departure.

This account of the Harrisons made Clara very thoughtful. But Eleanor was too full of herself, and her own hopes, to bear to dwell for a moment on a subject which, had she done so, might have made *her* thoughtful too.

In the evening, Clara and Eleanor, accompanied by a married lady and Davenant, went to a small party, the amusement of which was to consist of amateur music and dancing.

The evening opened with duets and songs by Clara, Eleanor, and other amateur performers; which were succeeded by quadrilles, in which Eleanor, animated by the wish to

shine, looked so pre-eminently handsome, and danced so gracefully, that Davenant, who was not dancing, followed her wherever she moved, with delighted admiration, and seemed to hang on every word which fell from her beautiful lips.

Clara, who had sprained her foot, could not dance; and while she saw the effect of Eleanor's graceful performance, with which she was then unable to compete, she almost sickened at the sight, and fixed her eyes with salutary perseverance on the music of a quadrille which she was playing.

Quadrilles being over, waltzes began; and Davenant, leading Eleanor to a seat near Clara, said with an air of triumph, "I am glad to find you do not waltz, Miss Musgrave—nor you, Miss Delancy."

Clara bowed, saying, "No; I disapprove waltzes, and never waltzed in my life."

Eleanor did not say the same; indeed she dared not in the hearing of Clara; for when her guardian, who forbade her to waltz, was not present, she had disregarded his prohibition, and waltzed frequently—a disobedience which she regretted now she heard Davenant's opinion; and she had the grace to look rather confused when Davenant went on to express his dislike of waltzing.

"Do not mistake me, however," said he; "I do not mean to say that I consider all young ladies who waltz as devoid of modesty, delicacy, or proper feeling; but I feel that I should wish my sister, or my mistress, or my wife, to have a sort of untaught aversion to the familiarity which waltzing induces. I would have her prize too highly, from self-respect, the sort of favour which a woman confers on a man with whom she waltzes, to be willing to bestow it on any one of her acquaintance. I would wish her to preserve her person unprofaned by any clasping arm, but that of privileged affection. For indeed, dear Miss Musgrave, if I saw even a woman whom I loved, borne along the circling waltz, as I see these young ladies now borne, I should be tempted to address her partner in the words of a noble poet—'What you touch you may take.'"

Eleanor listened, fanned herself, avoided the eye of Clara, which she saw was seeking hers, while she expressed her warmest acquiescence in all Davenant said, and forced herself to add some words of more than assent to the "Certainly—Very true—O dear, yes!"—with which she had filled up the pauses in his observations.

Eleanor now rose in order to change the subject, and pretended to want to speak to a friend across the room. At this moment a very fine young man came up and said to her, "Don't you waltz to-night? Let me lead you to the set now forming."

"I waltz!" replied Eleanor with great quickness; "I waltz!—I would not waltz for the world!"

"No!—I am sure I have seen you waltz, and waltzed with you."

"Never. You are dreaming, Mr. Fielding. I *detest* waltzing."

The young man was going to persist in his very just assertions; but Eleanor contrived, unseen by Davenant, who had listened to this dialogue with suspicious misgivings, to frown him and wink him into silence; and apologizing for a mistake which seemed to wound her feelings so much, Mr. Fielding bowed and withdrew; while Eleanor was glad to conceal her perturbed countenance from Davenant, by going to speak to the lady mentioned above.

She took care, however, when Davenant was not in sight, to seek Mr. Fielding, and explain to him, after her manner, why she had denied so positively an undeniable matter of fact. "It was," said she, "because I was afraid that Mr. Davenant should tell my guardian if I owned that I had ever waltzed; and you know that he disapproves waltzing, and would have forbidden me perhaps to come to a waltzing ball again; so pray forgive me, Fielding, and accept this apology."

"Forgive thee! Yes! sweet deceiver;" replied Fielding, with something between a sneer and a smile on his face:

'If from thy lips some milk-white falsehoods fall,
Look in thy face and one forgets them all.'"

Eleanor tried to smile; but she felt humbled, and heartily did she wish this circumstance had not occurred.

The dancing was now over for a time, and the music was resumed. Glee succeeded to glee, and catch to catch; when, to Clara's great surprise, Eleanor urged Davenant to favour them with a song without music, which he used to sing to them sometimes at home. And as Davenant did not sing well enough to sing at such a party, she felt all the jealous fear of delicate affection, lest its object should appear to disadvantage. Her expressive countenance betrayed to Davenant what she thought, and approaching her he said, "I see that you are afraid I shall expose myself."

"I have, I must own," said Clara, "an objection to your singing alone. It is a sort of exhibition which does not accord, in my opinion, with the dignity of your character. I cannot wish *you* to show off as a singer amongst such persons as these."

Clara spoke almost pettishly; for she was chagrined at the evident influence which Eleanor and her flatteries had obtained over Davenant's better judgment. And he felt a little piqued in his turn.

"Perhaps you think me," he returned, "too old either to sing or dance?"

"By no means," she replied; "I have stated to you my only objection."

But casting an angry glance aside at Clara, Eleanor declared that "she talked like an idiot; and that he should sing." And he was so surrounded and so pressed to favour them with the Hindoo air and words which Miss Musgrave had so much extolled, that he was forced to comply; casting, as he did so, a supplicating look at Clara, who most earnestly wished herself out of the room.

For as his voice was a bass one of no particularly fine tone, and as no one but himself understood the words which he was singing, the exhibition was certainly one beneath the acknowledged talents and merit of Mr. Davenant. He sung too under the disadvantage of excessive fear, increased by the consciousness that an eye, whose glance of approbation he highly valued, was bent in painful though kind anxiety on the ground; and that, however loud might be the praises of others, and even of Eleanor, he should not be satisfied with, nor reconciled to himself, unless he received applause from the speaking look and truth-telling lip of Clara Delancy.

He ended.—He was applauded even by clapping of hands and by words of animated praise from Eleanor. But neither Clara's eyes nor lips vouchsafed a word or look of approbation; and wounded self-love whispered, "Why should I for one moment care whether I please the fastidious Clara, when the kind and equally judicious Eleanor is pleased with my performance?"

Davenant was now asked to sing in a glee; and he complied.

"You see I am going to expose myself again," said he to Clara, almost petulantly.

"If you do, it will at least be in company," she answered. "Glee singing is commonly a very imperfect and bad performance, unless the performers have been in the habit of singing together and have practised beforehand. I always consider the clamorous eagerness often testified for glee and catch singing, as the resource of vanity and egotism, that can't bear to be quiet and silent, and had rather sing a thing ill than not sing at all."

"You are really a severe examiner of motives," replied Davenant. "I did not expect it from you. You are a bright-looking May morning, that cuts one in the face with a keen north-easter. But you are right. However, marshal your egotists, and let us get the task over as soon as possible."

She did so; and four persons who never even met before, prepared to sing together in perfect harmony and perfect time.

Clara's quick ear, however, soon discovered that Davenant had now undertaken nothing to which he was not fully equal; and the style in which he executed the bass, and at sight too, was so gratifying to her, that she could not help every now and then turning on him looks of evident satisfaction. The other singers did better than could have been expected, and the glee was *encored*.

When it was over, Clara with delighted eagerness thanked Davenant for the pleasure which he had given her, and Eleanor's praise was faint to that of Clara.

Davenant listened with gratified feelings to all she observed; and taking her hand, said, with great animation, "It is delightful, indeed, to be praised by you; because one is so sure that you never say more than you really think."

Eleanor heard this just tribute with a very painful emotion; and in order to seem not to hear it, she appeared busy in turning over a music-book. An instrument in the next room now played a favourite quadrille, and the other music was discontinued. But Davenant, whose wounded self-love was now healed again, still lingered near Clara, when Eleanor came and claimed his promise to dance a quadrille with her.

"What!" exclaimed Clara, "are you going to dance a quadrille? I thought you said you never danced one in your life?"

"Nor did I; but your cousin says she is sure I can, and that I can soon learn; and as she has volunteered being my partner, and as I am proud to be her slave, I am going, as you think no doubt, to expose myself now in another line."

Clara did not reply; but she looked perturbed; yet she could not help following to the dancing-room; and, like the bird with the rattlesnake, was forced in spite of herself to gaze on what was destruction at least to her peace though not to her life.

Davenant, like other persons under similar circumstances, blundered, though every movement was rehearsed, and invariably *chassèed* to the right when he should have gone to the left. Nor did he dance the better for knowing that the eyes of Clara were observing his movements. And once he accosted her, while he rested from his exertions, and said, "I fear that you are surprised at my folly in complying with Miss Musgrave's desire."

"No," she replied, as she turned away and left the room; "No—Hercules spun, you know." And Davenant almost thought that Clara was rather jealous. "Is it possible," said he to himself, "that I can be wrong about the poor lieutenant?"

Soon after, finding that he blundered worse than ever, he entreated to be allowed to resign his place. But Eleanor declared that "if he retired she would;" and he was therefore obliged to finish his unpleasant task.

But as soon as it was over, Davenant took advantage of Eleanor's stopping to speak to some lady, to go in search of Clara.

"Hercules has done spinning for the present," said he to her; "but I suppose you think him only too ready to begin again?"

"I do, as he sees no harm in it—no degradation I mean."

"And you do?"

"To say the truth," replied Clara, "I may be very absurd,—but I do not like to see any men dance. And I think that quadrilles, if not even country dances, would look better if danced by women only, or with only *very* young men. Few men move gracefully; and when dancing, as it is now, is quite an exhibition, I do wonder when I see men of sense, and men of a certain age and rank in life, exhibit themselves with the attempted steps and gestures of dancing masters, with their *sçavoir faire* and agility. But never in my life could I bear to see a man whom I esteemed and respected dance. I remember once, when a gentleman to whom I looked up as the most admirable and captivating of men (who is now, alas! no more) was made steward to a ball in our neighbourhood, and I was told that he meant to open the ball himself; I declared that if he did, I would leave the room, for that I could not bear to see the object of my highest esteem and admiration degrade himself by an act so much beneath him. But he did not dance, and my feelings were spared."

"And is it only the happy object of your esteem and admiration then," said Davenant, grasping her hand and looking at her with eyes expressive of animated tenderness, "whom you cannot bear to see dance? If so, I may be proud of your aversion to see me exhibit."

Clara, instantly recalled to the full force of what she had implied by this unguarded speech, blushed in the utmost confusion; and trying to disengage her hand from his tenacious pressure, said, "I said esteem and admiration only, not love."

"True," said Davenant, suddenly relinquishing her hand, "they are not *love*, indeed;" and turning away, he went in search of Eleanor; leaving Clara so unable to reconcile the expression with which he had regarded her, and the words which he had uttered, with exclusive and decided preference of Eleanor, that she more than suspected he was, with regard to herself, under some *false impression.*

It was now supper-time, and several little tables ready covered were crowded into the room; at which different parties seated themselves.

Eleanor, who was excessively jealous of the deference for Clara's opinion, and the desire of appearing to advantage in her eyes, which Davenant had manifested that evening, contrived to prevent him from sitting at the same table with Clara, by fixing herself at a different one; for Davenant, she knew, if inclination did not lead him to remain by her side, must do it in compliance with custom, since he had just been her partner in the dance. The tables, however, were rather near to each other, and Eleanor had soon reason to be alarmed at their proximity, as Mr. Fielding (the young man to whom she had unblushingly made apologies and given reasons for the falsehood which she had uttered respecting waltzing,) was seated at the same table with Clara, of whom he was suspected of being the admirer; but, as his fortune and expectations gave him no pretensions whatever to her hand, he was never known to express his admiration of her, except when he had been betrayed into drinking too much wine; and he was one of those unfortunate persons, who, though usually sober even to abstemiousness, have no sooner drunk a certain quantity than they become incapable of restraint, and drink themselves in a short time into a temporary madness.

This painful result of intoxication soon showed itself in Fielding; and every fresh glass increased the evidences of it.

Clara, meanwhile, patiently bore for a little time the words of muttered admiration with which he addressed her; while he was ever and anon looking at Eleanor, and murmuring out "Fine woman!—but lies like a chambermaid," and other things of the sort, which Eleanor feared Davenant would overhear; and she also feared he would see the looks which accompanied them.

Clara was alarmed for herself, and distressed for Eleanor; she therefore rose and broke up the party. When she did so, Fielding rose also, and exclaimed, "Stop, Miss Delancy, do you ever waltz?"

"Never; you know I never do."

"True, you say so; and *therefore* I know you never do; for you are all truth, all honour. Look at her—see that fine form, and upright, dignified carriage; and her mind is as upright as her person. Here's a bumper to her health," he added, filling a glass as he spoke, and drinking it off; while he held Clara's gown to detain her near him.

"My dear Charles," said Clara kindly, "let me go, and do not, I entreat you, drink any more."

"Not drink any more! Not drink," he replied; "O Clara Delancy!" and immediately sung the following song in the sweetest voice, and with the most touching expression possible:—

"Nay, bid me not forswear that bowl,
Through which alone I'm ever blest;
The charm that can despair control,
And give my sleepless pillow rest!

With pleasures sober day denies,
Night's festive moments bless my lot;
Recall'd no more are love's vain sighs,
And e'en my scanty store's forgot.

Then let me quaff the nectar down,
Which makes me rich, and makes me bold;
And bids me dare that passion own,
So long endured but never told.

Too soon despair and day will come,
And I my dream of bliss resign;
Till then, avaunt my dreary home!
Here joy, and even hope, are mine."

Clara, distressed at this public homage, and affected by the song and the singing, now took the arm of Eleanor and begged her to hasten from the room; but Fielding followed them, and seized Eleanor's arm. She turned round, and calling him "Dear Charles," begged him to let her go. He obeyed; but looking at her very scornfully, said, "Dear Charles!—I don't know you, madam—never saw you in my life—never spoke to you in my life—you must be dreaming, madam;" parodying Eleanor's words to him and mimicking her manner.

Davenant, who, though he did not understand Fielding's meaning, felt that he meant to annoy Eleanor, turned round with an intention of desiring him to desist; but luckily Clara remarked his air and gesture; and putting him back with her hand, gently took hold of Fielding's arm, and hurrying him forward into the music-room, said, "My good Charles, you will be very, very sorry to-morrow to recollect, or to be told, how much to-night you have distressed me and Eleanor."

"Yes, I shall be sorry to have distressed *you;* but as to Eleanor—"

"Hush! remember she is my friend, and in distressing and insulting her, you distress and insult me."

"You!—you!—Oh, Miss Delancy! I insult you!—you whom I would at any time die to serve!"

"If this be true, show your friendship by abstaining from further improprieties, and go home; for you know you are not fit to stay."

"True, true," said he; "I will—I will—prove my loyalty and my obedience;—so farewell!—Oh, Clara, Clara!—*In vino veritas*, the proverb says, and I exemplify it whenever I drink too much wine, and am near you. Good night, pity and forgive me!" So saying, he wrung her hand, and turned back on his way to leave the house; but meeting Eleanor and Davenant, he could not forbear giving her a parting pang; and drawing up and pretending to fan himself as she did, he said—"I waltz!—would not waltz for the world. I waltz!—never waltzed in my life. You are dreaming, Mr. Fielding;" then, with a low bow to her of mock respect, he ran out of the room.

"I am so glad he is gone," said Eleanor, trembling as she spoke; he is so mad after a few glasses of wine, that he is really quite terrible; and as he is too both proud and poor, I wounded his pride by refusing to waltz with him; and because in his wild fancies he thinks he had seen me waltz, and has waltzed with me, his pride has taken alarm, and he behaves as you see."

This speech, which was a very plausible one, quieted the suspicions which Davenant was again beginning to entertain of Eleanor's veracity on this subject.

When Davenant and Eleanor entered the music room, they found Clara surrounded by a party, who were entreating her to sing a ballad to the Spanish guitar, which was now produced and put into her hand. She complied instantly; and being full of anxious thought, which rendered it a matter of indifference to her whether she sung well or ill, she had unimpaired possession of all her powers.

Accordingly, she sung, with exquisite voice and feeling, the following words to the tune of "De'il take the wars."

"Joy to my love, this cruel war is ended,
Peace gives thy soldier to thy arms again;
Soon love's fond kiss with tears as tender blended,
Well shall repay whole years of pain.

And shall we meet again in cloudless pleasure,
Who parted, torn with wild and hopeless woe!
Yes, dearest girl, my bosom's only treasure,
Guardian powers have will'd it so;

Have will'd from days of sorrow,
From nights that hoped no morrow,
Our present bliss should borrow,
By contrast's power, new zest.
And when again we meet,
Will pity's throb be sweet,
O'er hearts that fondly mourn
For those who 'll ne'er return,
While *we united* are,
And are MOST BLEST."

"Miss Delancy really sung *con amore*," said Davenant with a sigh; and he whispered to Eleanor, "I suppose she was thinking of her poor lieutenant?"

"What do you know of the poor lieutenant?" said Eleanor.

"Your uncle has told me all about him—Do you not think she has thought of *him?*"

"I am sure she did," she replied, resolved to keep up in Davenant's mind an impression which she believed favourable to her own interests;—"but it was very wrong in my guardian to tell tales—I have been more honourable."

"Because more *trusted*, perhaps?"

Eleanor did not answer, she only smiled significantly. Soon after, the party broke up, and the carriages were announced. Mr. Morley's carriage was now called; but as the gentleman who went in search of it said, on his return, that it was some way off, Clara, who wished to get home, proposed walking to it; and her companions consented.

Clara and this gentleman and the *chaperone* went first, Davenant and Eleanor followed. Unfortunately their carriage stood opposite the door of a fashionable coffee-house, whence four young men issued, warm with champagne and Burgundy, just as Davenant and Eleanor were passing; and one of the gentlemen very rudely stood in the way of Eleanor, and prevented her reaching the carriage in which Clara and the other lady were already seated; the former of whom, by springing

into the carriage hastily to avoid this party, had hurt her sprained foot severely.

Davenant pushed the intruder away with his arm; on which the young man thrust it back rather violently, and desired to know what he meant by striking a gentleman; and catching hold of his coat, declared he should not go till he had given him satisfaction.

Davenant at last broke from him, and placed the screaming and terrified Eleanor in the coach; then turning back, as his persevering foe seized his arm, he said in a low voice, "Do not frighten the ladies—here is my card, if you have anything to say to me to-morrow." Then jumping in, he desired the servant to drive to the house of the lady who was with them; and they drove off before the young man had read the card, which Clara had seen given, and she had also seen his angry countenance by the light of the lamp.

She resolved therefore to inform her guardian of what had passed, that very night, if he was not in bed; and if he was, she determined to send him a note previous to his rising the next day, and desire him to go to Davenant before anything unpleasant could take place; and with this intention she tried to calm her anxious feelings in the meanwhile. But that was no easy matter; for Eleanor, to whom the evening had presented a number of little mortifications, which had overcome her usual buoyant spirits, was now completely subdued by this unpleasant alarm; and she gave way to violent tears, almost amounting to hysterical affection. During this agitation she leaned her head against Davenant's shoulder; and as he tenderly supported and kindly soothed her, poor Clara, who was really enduring excessive pain from her foot, was not made more easy by witnessing this scene.

The coach stopped to set down the *chaperone* and went on again, while Clara looked out of the window in order to avoid observing what she now feared might be the tenderness of *declared* lovers; and as she did so, she lifted up her full and burdened heart in supplication that she might be enabled to bear with fortitude and calmness this severe trial.

Scarcely had her thoughts returned to earth again, and she had begun to suspect, on Eleanor's redoubling her sobs, that she was now feigning what she had before really felt, in order to prolong the tender assiduities of Davenant, when by the light of the lamps, she saw the same young man running alongside of the coach who had assaulted Davenant; and she concluded that he meant to demand the promised satisfaction that night with a view to a meeting the next day.

Terror of the most painful nature now took possession of her; but she had resolution not to mention what she saw; and Eleanor contrived so completely to absorb Davenant's attention by her now feigned indisposition, that the real illness and deep anxiety of Clara were not even suspected by either of them; and a feeling which she could not conquer, made her resolve not to complain and ask to put her foot up on the seat by Eleanor—no, not though she *died* from the forbearance. And while Davenant uttered and Eleanor heard the words, "Dear girl! My sweet Eleanor!"—even Clara's presence seemed forgotted by them both.

At length they reached home, and Davenant insisted on taking out the apparently nerveless Eleanor in his arms. He then returned to hand out Clara, wondering that he had never seen her offer to assist Eleanor in any way as she rose to get to the step of the coach. But his wonder ceased, when, on reaching the carriage, and receiving no answer when he announced his return, he ascended the step and found Clara cold, pale, and insensible in one corner of the seat.

Self-reproved for his long neglect of her, he now bore her from the coach with trembling anxiety to a sofa in the dining-parlour, where her appearance so much resembled death, that Davenant experienced considerable alarm, till Eleanor assured him she had only fainted, and that stimulating scents would soon revive her. But there were none in the house; and a gentleman who had entered the parlour after Davenant and Clara, now ran out of it again, and returned soon with salts and hartshorn, which Eleanor took without looking at him; and on their application Clara revived, to the great relief of Davenant, who demanded of Eleanor to what she attributed Clara's illness.

Eleanor was ready with an answer; she therefore whispered in reply, "Did you not hear at the party that the 54th regiment of foot was ordered to the West Indies immediately?"

"I did; and is that the regiment where—?"

"Yes."

"Oh, then this is all accounted for."

Clara now recovered her senses, and opened her eyes; but the moment she beheld the stranger who had followed the party in, who had fetched the medicines, and who had now retired into the back of the room, she eagerly exclaimed, fixing on him a look of terror and aversion, "what does that man do here? and what brings him hither?" And as she spoke, she inadvertently threw her right arm round Davenant, who hung over her, as if she meant to protect him.

This exclamation turned all eyes on the stranger, who gracefully approaching, though in considerable emotion, exclaimed, "Be easy, sweet soul! and never let me see such an expression of hate and terror of me again on the sweetest face in the world, or I shall die of it for ever. Mr. Davenant, I am the unfortunate gentleman to whom you gave your card just now."

"Then, sir, let us retire."

"No, sir, I must speak here.—When I saw

your name, I thought the sight would have killed me. And have I (said I to myself) been affronting that noble and generous Mr. Davenant! who not only saved my poor brother John's life in India, but his fame, and very likely his soul too! So I ran as fast as I could after the carriage, which luckily for me, stopped to set down; and here I am with a head full of wine, but a heart full of gratitude, to make any apology that you think fit. O, Mr. Davenant, what would poor John O'Byrne feel if he knew that his brother had lifted his arm against you! O, sir! if you have any pity in your nature, do lay your cane across my shoulder, and then I shall be easy."

All this was uttered with such volubility, that Davenant could not interrupt him. But now taking his hand, he said, "he could not have been sorry for any circumstance that had made him known to Colonel O'Byrne, a gallant and much-respected officer, if that circumstance had not alarmed the ladies present; and he assured him, that of his pardon he was certain; but that he required him to ask that of Miss Delancy and Miss Musgrave."

"Oh! you are only too generous to me," replied O'Byrne; "ask pardon of these sweet creatures!—that I will!—but how often? must I not come every day for a month, and ask it at stated hours? But no, that would be reward and not punishment, and I know I only deserve the latter; and yet," added he, with a deep sigh as he gazed on Clara, "Miss Delancy's look of aversion gave me a pang sufficient to punish the greatest of all sinners.—Ladies, am I forgiven? And will you, Miss Delancy, promise never to look at me in that manner again?"

"I will," she replied, offering him her hand; "except you deserve it again."

"Then I am happy," he exclaimed.

"And that other young lady forgives you also."

"Then good night; and I hope, Mr. Davenant, you will allow me to profit by your card—not to take your life—but endeavour to surprise your friendship; for I would rather be the friend of such a man as you, than the aide-de-camp of an emperor."

So saying, he withdrew. And Davenant soon followed him, as Clara, though her mind was now relieved of the fear which had combined with excessive bodily agony, to cause her faintness, was unable to sit up a moment longer; and Eleanor and her own maid assisted her to her room.

But when there, she was unable to sleep from bodily and mental pain; for, after the scene she had witnessed in the coach, she could not doubt but that Davenant intended to make proposals to Eleanor, if he had not already done so, and she was very sure they would be accepted. "Still," thought Clara, "his manner to me is at times full as tender as it is to Eleanor."

The next morning Davenant called in about noon. He too had passed a sleepless night. Colonel O'Byrne, (whom he found in the street,) after going into a rapture concerning Clara, hoped he might, without presumption, ask whether he was engaged to Miss Delancy?

"O dear, no!" was the reply.

"But is there no love at all between you? for indeed, Mr. Davenant, I could not but think the sweet creature threw her fine arm round you, to protect you from me, in a manner very like love, and made you the most enviable of men in my eyes."

"Indeed, I am not so happy," replied Davenant. But he himself could not help remembering, and with excessive emotion, that Clara had thrown her arm around him, and had gazed on O'Byrne with abhorrence. Yet he remembered that, benevolent as she was, she would have acted and looked the same, probably, whoever had been the object in danger.

After an inquiry concerning Clara's health and foot, Davenant exclaimed, "So, Miss Delancy, I find that Colonel O'Byrne's exertions in your favour the other night were not the mere result of spontaneous humanity, but of a tenderer feeling."

"Nonsense!" replied Clara; "what has the foolish man been telling you?"

"No nonsense, but a serious truth to him, poor fellow! I breakfasted with him this morning, and he told me that the look of terror and aversion with which you regarded him, has haunted him ever since; and that the greatest favour I could do him would be to give him an opportunity, by introducing him to my uncle, of obtaining from you one of your usual sweet and benevolent smiles. May I venture to bring him?"

"Any friend of yours I shall be glad to see."

"But do you wish to see him only as a friend of mine? Are you not aware that at the Opera, at the Play, in the Drive, and wherever he could contrive to see you, Colonel O'Byrne has for a month past gazed at you with as constant an observation as astronomers bestow on a favourite planet."

"I must own that I have thought myself lately, the object of his gaze;—but at first I concluded it was Eleanor, and I told her so."

"So you did," said Eleanor; "and I own that I thought so too, till he called yours the other night the sweetest face in the world."

"He only said what he thought, poor man!—and he is very ambitious of trying to make Miss Delancy think the same of his face, and endeavouring to win the heart that beams in Miss Delancy's face. I told him I could not presume to determine how far he had any chance for success. But what says Miss Delancy herself?"

"She says," replied Clara with great emotion, "that as your friend, and her friend, she

shall always be willing to see and receive Colonel O'Byrne; but that he never, never can be more to her than a friend."

"But if Colonel O'Byrne asks me if there be any particular reason for your crushing his hopes—what am I to say?"

"Is it necessary to give a reason?"

"Suppose he should ask whether your affections are already engaged—what can I answer?"

"Tell him you do not know," she replied, turning very pale.

"But what if *I* wish to know, and presume to ask the question?—What if for reasons of *my own* I ask you as a friend interested in your welfare, whether your affections are disengaged or not?"

Clara, confounded at this most unexpected address, got up, sat down, turned now pale, now red, and was at first wholly unable to answer. Eleanor meanwhile was equally perturbed, though from different feelings; for she was aware that such was Clara's diseased reverence (as she thought it) for truth, that she would answer "yes," if she answered at all; and that if Davenant asked whether Lieutenant Beaumont were the object of her love, she would as decidedly answer "no;" she therefore feared that Davenant might, on hearing that negative, begin to suspect from her confusion that he himself was the beloved object. She accordingly thought it better to interfere; and had just begun to chide Davenant for putting such questions to such a truth-speaking person, when Clara found courage to reply, "Surely, sir, no one has a right to put such a question as yours to any woman; I therefore beg you to excuse my answering it; and in so doing, allow me to observe, that I believe I am only asserting the privileges of my sex."

"I am answered, madam," said Davenant bowing coldly and proudly; "and have now no doubts remaining. You would have instantly said no, ingenuous as you are, if you could have done so with truth. But though the daughter of Mrs. Delancy does not choose to consider me as her friend, I hope to be able one day or other to convince her that I am such, and that my recent question was not dictated by idle curiosity."

Clara now endeavoured to answer him, but could not; and bursting into tears she hastily left the room.

"Ah! I see how it is! poor O'Byrne!" cried Davenant, "and happy Beaumont! for that is the name of the lieutenant, is it not?"

"It is," replied Eleanor, and changed the subject as fast as possible.

The next day, as Clara was desirous of air, though she was unable to take exercise, she accompanied Eleanor, Davenant, and her guardian, in the open barouche to a florist's in the King's Road. On their way they drove through Bond-street; and while their course was impeded for a few minutes by the throng of carriages, a young man, seeing Clara, came out of a shop near which they were detained, and begged leave to show her the sword which she had bespoken, as it was quite finished and ready to send according to order.

"A sword!—you order a sword, child! What can you want with a sword?" exclaimed her guardian to the conscious Clara, who was covered with blushes of the deepest confusion; while Davenant, though he had taught himself at last to believe all hope of Clara's being his was over, felt as much agitated as if he now suspected it for the first time.

Clara however soon recovered herself, and replied, "I certainly do not want a sword for myself, sir; but I want one as a gift for a military friend of mine, and I shall be glad to have your opinion of it."

"Oh, ho! I see how it is," said Morley, with a significant and pleased look at Eleanor; and he would have looked at Davenant, but his head was averted; for he really felt his mind relieved by the conviction which he now had, that what he had uttered, fancying it *might be a lie*, was in reality *a truth*.

The young man now exhibited the sword, which was so handsome in all respects as to deserve every possible commendation; and Eleanor with an arch smile observed, "Your military friend, Clara, will really be the envy of the regiment."

The young man now desired to know to whom and to what place the sword was to be sent; and Clara replied with more blushes,—for she was conscious of the interpretation to which her expensive gift had exposed her,—"It is to be sent to Lieutenant Beaumont, 54th regiment, Lynn Regis."

The carriage then drove on; and both Eleanor and Morley, feeling their spirits exhilarated by the unusual consciousness that they were in reality more honest than they had thought themselves, talked and laughed incessantly. But Clara was too oppressed by an unpleasant consciousness to speak; and Davenant, spite of his better judgment, felt displeased and jealous. Nor were these emotions unmixed with pique, though he knew he had no right to feel it; and he showed this feeling by carefully avoiding to look at or speak to Clara, and by seeming to be wholly engrossed by Eleanor's bewitching smiles, and to hang enamoured on her winning accents.

Clara saw and felt his neglect, and almost fancied that the sword had occasioned this marked change in his manner. "If so," thought she, "he loves me, and is jealous! and O that I had but resolution to declare that Beaumont never will, never can, be more to me than he already is!"

But she could not prevail on herself to volunteer this assurance, and Davenant remained undeceived.

The next morning, as soon as Davenant

came, Morley desired to see him in his own study; and when he entered, his uncle looked so grave and so distant, that Davenant asked whether he had offended him.

"Offended me! No; but you have vexed and disappointed me, I own."

"In what, sir?"

"Why, I fear you are trifling with the affections of a too susceptible girl, Sidney."

"Sir!"

"Yes;—I see very clearly that Eleanor loves you, and I think she has some reason to think you love her; and yet I find from her that you have not made her any serious proposals."

"Did you ask the question, sir?"

"I did; because on questioning Clara alone concerning your behaviour to Eleanor last night, she owned that during the drive home, your behaviour to each other was so much that of lovers, that she concluded you meant to offer to Eleanor very soon."

"Miss Delancy said this?"

"Yes; therefore I really think it my duty, as Eleanor's guardian, to request that you will either desist from your attentions before the poor girl's peace is quite destroyed, or propose to her at once."

"What! before my mind is made up?"

"But your mind ought to be made up now one way or the other, Sidney."

"I own it—I own it.—And does Miss Delancy think I ought to offer to her friend?"

"To be sure she does," boldly replied Morley, fancying Clara's opinion had more weight with his nephew than his own.

"And perhaps she wishes me to offer to Eleanor?"

"No doubt she does."

"Did she tell you so?"

"Yes; I am, I am sure she did."

"Well, sir," said Davenant, "the die is now cast; and I hope by to-morrow I shall have quite resolved to offer to Eleanor—though I could have wished to have had more opportunities first of studying her character."

"Nonsense!" cried Morley; "do you not already know that she is a beauty, a great heiress, full of talents and accomplishments and graces, and that she loves you dearly?"

"The last I do not know; but that knowledge, sir, will be, after all, the most decisive with me."

They then separated. And as Eleanor that day and the next thought proper to look languid and depressed, before the day ended Davenent had offered her his hand, and he left the house her accepted and declared lover.

I will not venture to assert that Clara slept much that night, nor that she did not repine at Eleanor's happiness; but it was not from selfish feelings only, and because she wished Davenant's choice had fallen on herself. She was influenced also by a benevolent fear that as Davenant was evidently an artless and ingenuous character, he would not be happy in a union with a woman whose habits were of a contrary nature. But his fate was now decided, and hers too she feared. Still she met the blow with that dignity of mind which belonged to the integrity of her character, and was firmly resolved to struggle with and to overcome a passion already hopeless, and which would soon become criminal.

Eleanor certainly did all she could to increase Clara's secret pain, by the ungenerous triumph which she expressed; for though she more than suspected that Clara's feelings towards Davenant were very nearly those of love, she made a parade of her own hopes, and of the tender devotion which her lover displayed towards her.

Clara thought this conduct very ungenerous; but she would have excused it, had she known that Eleanor's declaration of confidence in Davenant's devoted attachment was a false one; and that, as she was only too sure, if her guardian and herself had not taken care to impress on his mind a conviction that Clara was in love with Mr. Beaumont, his choice would never have fallen on her, *pique* and *jealousy* urged the vaunting manner which, though it wounded Clara, proved that her happiness was not so secure as she declared it to be.

Clara's foot continued painful enough for a few days after the engagement of Davenant and Eleanor was known, to allow her to decline going out with them either on morning expeditions or to evening parties; and as she turned this enforced solitude to the best account, by fortifying her mind against the further indulgence of her feelings, she could not be said to be miserable, though she was very far from being happy. She was also supported by the consciousness, that no one but Eleanor suspected her attachment, and something whispered her that Eleanor would not reveal her weakness to Davenant.

Clara's foot was now considerably better; and she resolved to decline accompanying the lovers no longer. During her confinement, Morley had heard that no tidings had yet been received of the poor Harrisons; but that, though their creditors had suspected them of a fraudulent bankruptcy, it was thought they were living in great poverty and obscurity somewhere in London. Clara, on hearing this, would have given a great reward to any one who could have discovered their abode; but she could not contrive any means of setting about such an inquiry.

One morning Clara consented to accompany Eleanor and her *chaperone*, attended by Davenant, to make cheap purchases at Flint's, on Fish-street-hill. Eleanor and Clara being next the door when the carriage stopped, they were handed out by Davenant before their *chaperone;* and while Clara was looking round at the passing objects, as she was waiting till

the old lady with them should have alighted, she saw a man shabbily dressed pass on the other side of the street with a very quick step, and was convinced that she beheld the long-lost Mr. Harrison. She communicated her convictions to Eleanor, who was now following the old lady into the shop; and though Eleanor tried to detain her, she instantly, forgetting her recent lameness, ran down the street, keeping the supposed Mr. Harrison in sight, till she saw him disappear in a shop just round the corner.

Eleanor and Davenant now came up with her as she stopped to take breath, and Davenant chid her for forgetting her foot.

"How could I think of myself," cried she, "at such a moment!—But I must go into that shop after him."

"Pray do not," said Eleanor eagerly; "it would be cruelty and not kindness, to force Mr. Harrison, if it be really he, to be seen against his will."

And Davenant, who had heard the misfortunes and disappearance of the Harrisons discussed, was inclined to Eleanor's opinion. However, as Clara was already in the shop, and Davenant followed her, Eleanor was forced to go too.

But there was no Mr. Harrison to be seen. Still, as Clara was sure that she had seen him enter, she entreated to know whether a gentleman of the name of Harrison did not lodge there; and after a little hesitation the shopman said that a person of the name of Harrison and his family did certainly occupy the apartments on their second floor, but that they never saw any one.

"O yes! I am sure they will see me," cried Clara; and she had scarcely added, "take up this card to them," when Mr. Harrison, unconscious what was going forward, came down stairs and re-entered the shop. He started at seeing Clara and Eleanor, and would have retreated; but Clara seized his arm; and bursting into tears as she gazed on his indigent appearance, his pale cheek, and anxious countenance, she faltered out, "My dear Mr. Harrison, why have you so long and so cruelly hidden yourself from your friends?"

Eleanor too, but with embarrassment, now came forward and reproached him as Clara had done; while Clara begged to see his wife and family. Excessive emotion at first prevented Mr. Harrison from replying; but at length he said he would prepare his wife for the visit, and left them.

"Had I not better return to Flint's," said Davenant, "to the old lady?"

"Certainly, certainly," said Eleanor, eagerly.

But Clara, who wished him to witness a scene which would, she thought, be the means of interesting him in her friends' favour, as she knew his power to serve them was great, requested him not to go till Mr. Harrison came back. When he did, she presented Davenant to him, whom Mr. Harrison remembered when he was a boy; and she asked if he might not accompany them up stairs.

"Certainly," said Harrison; "it is less painful to have strangers witness our change of fortune than friends;—but my poor wife wishes to see such dear friends as you and Miss Musgrave; and if what the papers tell us is true, Mr. Davenant has a right to follow Miss Musgrave anywhere."

Davenant smiled, Eleanor blushed, Clara sighed, and followed Harrison up the dark and narrow stairs, which led to a large, low, dark room looking into a court, where three fine girls were busily employed working muslin for a maintenance, (as they afterwards learned,) and a fourth was copying music.

As soon as the poor girls saw Clara and Eleanor, they ran up to them, and hanging fondly round them, wept out a welcome; while both their visiters were too much affected at the evidences of indigence and virtuous industry around them, to be able to speak;—nor was Davenant an unmoved spectator of the scene.

A door which led to an inner apartment now opened and Mrs. Harrison appeared, leaning on the arm of her husband and walking with difficulty; while on her pale face and meagre person, few traces remained of that excelling loveliness which had so long provoked the envy of Mrs. Somerville, and had been one of the causes of her present distress.

She received Clara and Eleanor with great affection, and declared they were the only friends of her better days whom she could bear to see, because she was sure that they had no pleasure in witnessing a scene like the present; and if Mr. Davenant was worthy (and she did not doubt but he was) the hand of Eleanor Musgrave, she knew he would commiserate as strongly as they did, what she might call undeserved obloquy and misfortune.

Mrs. Harrison was now placed on a couch by her affectionate husband; and as she lay there supported by pillows, her visiters sat near her, in order that they might hear what she said, as her illness had rendered her voice faint, and her husband seated himself on the couch beside her.

"My dear friend," said Clara, "I was not prepared to see you so very ill—but you are better, I hope?"

"Yes; for since my girls and their father have procured employment, I am happier; and as medicine and attendance are very expensive things, you know I cannot afford to be ill; and if I get well, I can perhaps earn money too."

"Oh! my dear young friends," cried Harrison, "there is the pang, the greatest pang of all—to see that woman, rich, well-born, and accustomed to luxuries, now in this miserable, unhealthy place, and talking of working for her bread!"

"It must not be—it shall not be," cried Clara and Eleanor at once, and Davenant turned away.

"It must be, or we must submit to owe pecuniary obligation; and my pride is not yet sunk so low," said Mrs. Harrison.

At this moment, a fine boy about three years old ran up stairs, and bounded into the room, saying, "Mamma, papa, don't you know it is my birthday, and that I always used to have a plum-pudding for my dinner! but Mary says she can't make one now."

This artless remonstrance occasioned a silence of a minute or two. At length, Mr. Harrison, seating the little pleader on his knee, said in a hoarse voice, "My dear James, we never mean to keep birthdays in our family again; but Mary may buy you two-pennyworth of raisins, as you are a good child, and it *is* your birthday;" and the delighted child, after struggling to get from Clara, who wanted to kiss him, because he was so eager to procure the plums, ran out of the room in a transport of infantine joy.

"No, no," said Mr. Harrison, "poor child! thy parents have had enough of keeping birthdays.—I suppose you know, young ladies, that our present misfortunes are wholly owing to that little dance we gave, to celebrate the return of our son Richard, on his birthday?"

"No, indeed, we did not," said Clara with great emotion, casting a side-look at Eleanor, who turned excessively pale.

"Yes, some one was so cruel as to go and tell the Somervilles—No, to tell Mrs. Somerville, that we had fine company, fine music, fine wines,—such as champagne, and I believe Burgundy; pines, grapes; in short—such a supper, as even in our best days we could not have purchased, and which was, *you know*, entirely made up of the remnants of presents given us by our friends. This made Mr. Somerville conclude I had made a secret purse and a fraudulent bankruptcy; therefore, when I had the prospect of getting into a lucrative trade, he refused to sign my certificate, and even persuaded my other creditors, formerly my well-wishers, to believe with him that I was a dishonest man, nay, I might say, a villain. Being thus deprived of reputation, I could not bear to remain where I fancied every eye I met reproached me; and we removed to London, resolving to hide ourselves from every one; while the remittances which my eldest son in India had sent me, were all expended very soon, in trying to restore that dear sufferer, whose health sunk under the consciousness of disgrace, though she knew it to be unmerited; and at length we were forced to remove hither."

"But why," cried Clara, "did you not apply to us to clear your aspersed fame to Mr. Somerville?"

"You were in London, and he refused even to see or hear from me."

"But he is in London now, and we will go to him directly," said Eleanor, rising and trembling in every limb.

"It is too late now," said Mr. Harrison; "the business is disposed of."

"But another business may be procured," cried Davenant; "nay, it *shall* be procured." And the sanguine Clara already saw what she wished accomplished.

"You are very good," said the husband and wife; and the latter added, "But Mr. Somerville is an impracticable man—or rather his wife is an impracticable woman; and I do not know why exactly, but she always seemed to hate me, yet I never gave her any offence."

"Yes, you did—the greatest offence possible," cried Eleanor; "you were far more beautiful, more amiable, and more admired than herself; and though not richer than she was, you lived in a more elegant style and kept better company."

"I wish she could see me now," meekly replied Mrs. Harrison, glancing her faded eyes first on herself and then round the room, "and I think her malice towards me would be soon at an end."

Eleanor started from her seat, and turning to the window sobbed audibly; while Davenant, pleased with emotion which he attributed to genuine sensibility, tenderly tried to soothe her irritated feelings, by whispering promises to be a friend to Mr. Harrison.

"But can you cure her evident disease?—can you restore her to what she was before?" Here her sobs redoubled.

"O dear Eleanor!" said Mr. Harrison, "would such hearts as yours were more common! But indeed we were shocked and surprised to find we had a secret foe;—for who, but some one who hated us, could have told Mrs. Somerville such lies concerning our party? and we thought, except Mrs. Somerville, we had not an enemy in the world."

Clara now looked earnestly at Eleanor, and saw her bosom heave convulsively.

"By the bye," continued Mrs. Harrison, "some one assured us it was you, or Miss Delancy, Eleanor, who gave Mrs. Somerville such a false and fatal description of our entertainment. But I knew it could not be, and I was quite angry at any one's daring to accuse you."

Eleanor's good feelings were now forcibly awakened by the voice of compunction, and giving way to their dictates she precipitated herself at the feet of Mrs. Harrison; and seizing her hand exclaimed, "But it *was* I who did you this injury;—yet not as an enemy, but a friend; I did it to tease your known enemy Mrs. Somerville,—and you know the rest. But I shall never forgive myself as long as I live!"

Surprise, consternation, and sorrow, now kept every one silent but Clara, who eagerly

assured Mrs. Harrison that Eleanor had injured her most unconsciously, and that she deeply lamented that Mrs. Harrison had not instantly informed Eleanor of the charge, as by that means all would have been cleared up.

"But how could I bear to wound her feelings by telling her of so severe an accusation against her, which I did not believe she deserved? But rise, Miss Musgrave, pray do—I forgive you."

"But I shall never forgive myself," said Eleanor as she rose.

While a sort of uncomfortable silence had now stolen over the whole family of Harrison, which Eleanor eagerly broke by repeated solicitations to drive directly to Mr. Somerville's, Davenant told Mr. Harrison that he had a particular and great favour to beg of him; which was, that he would set off immediately, for him, to his estate in Surrey. "I understand, sir," said he, "that you were bred to the law, but relinquished it for a very lucrative trade. You are, therefore, as a quondam lawyer, and a man of business, the very person I want. I find my late uncle had a dishonest steward, and I want some one to go and see if he cannot be made to disgorge some of his ill-gotten wealth;—but, sir, you must not delay a day." And the gratified Harrison, really deceived by Davenant's manner into believing that he wanted his assistance, and preferred him on the occasion from a conviction of his integrity, eagerly expressed his willingness to set off directly; while Eleanor and Clara, who suspected Davenant's motive, found it difficult to suppress the tears of pleasure and approbation.

"Now, sir," said Davenant, "let me speak to you below stairs;" and when they returned, Harrison said he was going to take a place in the coach and get his best suit out of pawn; in the meanwhile he begged his girls to pack him up some linen, &c.

"You may think me a poor foolish woman," cried his agitated wife; "but the idea that I shall see you, Alfred, look like a gentleman again is very delightful to me!" while Harrison, pressing Davenant's hand, nodded adieu to the rest, for he could not speak, and ran down stairs.

In a few minutes more, (and while Davenant was assuring Mrs. Harrison that his pride would not allow him to suffer the wife and children of his agent, as he was now proud to call Mr. Harrison, to remain in such lodgings as these.) the little boy burst into the room, saying, "Papa had sent in a great big piece of cold plum-pudding, which was to be fried for dinner."

"Parents are weak fond creatures, you see," cried Mrs. Harrison, smiling through tears; "but I see, sir, that my husband considers this as a day of rejoicing, owing to your kindness;—and especially as, through your means, young ladies, we hope to be restored to our good name."

"I shall not know a moment's peace till I have convinced Mr. Somerville," said Eleanor; "and this terrible lesson will not, I trust, be lost on me in future life."

"Amen," said Davenant solemnly; and Eleanor felt rebuked and ashamed.

Davenant now told Mrs. Harrison that, as her guardian till her husband returned, he should insist on finding healthier and better lodgings for her, and should go in search of them immediately.

Mrs. Harrison, who was now quite overcome with all that had passed, was really too weary to object, even if she had had the inclination; and gracefully begging Davenant to believe she was sensible as she ought to be of his delicate attentions, she pressed Clara's hand, kissed Eleanor, who threw herself sobbing on her neck, and then desired her eldest daughter to lead her to her chamber.

Clara and Eleanor then followed Davenant, who had gone to call up the carriage; and after they were seated they drove to Flint's, to take up their wondering and half-angry companion. They then, as they were not far from Clapham, drove thither over London bridge, by Davenant's desire, in seach of lodgings; and having found very convenient ones on the edge of Clapham common, which could be entered that evening, they re-entered London over Westminster bridge, and drove to the house of Mr. Somerville. They luckily found him at home; and Clara, not without tears, described her successful effort to follow Mr. Harrison, and the whole scene of his poverty and his distress. She then described the agony of Eleanor, at finding that his misery and his injured fame proceeded from her false statement to Mrs. Somerville. Here Eleanor, the self-judged Eleanor, took up the narrative; and, with all the eloquence of compunction and of truth, confessed even her *motives* for the statement which she gave; and earnestly conjured Mr. Somerville, if he still believed Mr. Harrison a fraudulent bankrupt, go and visit him at his lodging in the city.

Mr. Somerville, who was really a good-natured man, could not resist the evidence now brought before him; and he expressed his sorrow for having been made the instrument of such suffering to a man whom he had once so highly esteemed.

"Then sir," cried Davenant, "I trust that you will instantly set about signing the certificate yourself, and convincing the other creditors of this injured man's entire innocence;—and if necessary I will draw up a paper of the whole for these ladies to sign."

"I trust it is not necessary, sir," said Mr. Somerville. And the visiters departed, leaving Mr. Somerville rather perplexed to know how his wife would relish the communication which he had to make to her, when she re-

turned from her drive in the Park. But when he gave her a detail of Mrs. Harrison's ill looks and altered person, and described minutely her excessive indigence, and the complete humiliation which her pride and that of her husband had received, she looked and spoke most graciously; and quite approved her husband's going instantly to the creditors, that "the poor man Harrison" might be enabled to get an honest livelihood some way or other as soon as possible.

But the benevolent being who was become deeply interested in the fate of the Harrisons, and the more so because his affianced wife had occasioned their sufferings, did not intend that "the poor man Harrison" should get an "honest livelihood" in any way but the best possible; and having learned in what house he had been offered a share of the business, he went to the principal partner, who, from a knowledge of Harrison's abilities and integrity, had offered him the share; and he found, as he expected, that that share was disposed of; but finding also that a much more considerable share was still to be obtained, he resolved to purchase it for Mr. Harrison,—and to be paid five per cent. for the money so advanced. Then with a lightened heart Davenant rejoined Clara and Eleanor, having hired a glass coach, in which, after a hasty dinner at five, he desired them to call on the Harrisons, and convey them to their lodgings—giving Mrs. Harrison a certain sum as part of the salary in advance which he had settled on her husband as his agent.

The commission was a delightful one, though the delight had to poor Eleanor considerable drawbacks; but Clara's eyes were brilliant with benevolent pleasure. Clara's brow was unconscious of any cloud which conscious error had gathered there; and while Davenent looked at her, he again thought the poor lieutenant was a very rich and enviable man.

I shall only add on this subject, that Mrs. Harrison suffered herself and children to be removed to the country lodging; and that her health was so much restored by the country air, by better food, and by recovered peace of mind, that when Mr. Harrison returned to town at the end of a fortnight, in consequence of a letter from Davenant, the affectionate husband shed tears of joy and thankfulness, as he held his once more smiling wife to his heart. The business on which Davenant sent for him raised his happiness to its climax; and in a few weeks he was one of the principal partners in a long-established and safe house in the metropolis; and his wife and children were restored to their situation in society.

Preparations were now making for the marriage of Davenant and Eleanor; when the former was forced to go into Surrey on business, as he really had employed a very acute lawyer, though he was not yet gone down, to transact for him the business on which, merely as an excuse for giving him money, he had employed Mr. Harrison. To Surrey therefore he went, meaning to stay a few days at his estate.

He had not been gone long, when he wrote to Eleanor, and informed her that he was unexpectedly obliged to hasten to another part of the country, to see an old friend whom he had known in India, as that friend was, he found, involved in a lawsuit, and wanted to see him; and that this unfortunate circumstance would detain him longer away from London. Two days after, Eleanor was informed that a gentleman wished to see her: and as soon as she entered the room, the said gentleman put a paper and a guinea in her hand, told her he came from Mr. Darby, Sir Richard Mildred's solicitor, and vanished before Eleanor could recover her presence of mind. On opening the paper, she found that it was a subpœna to appear as Sir Richard Mildred's witness, at a trial for defamation, in which George Bellamy, gentleman, was plaintiff, and Sir Richard Mildred, baronet, defendant. Eleanor nearly fainted at this terrible summons; and Clara and Morley, who now entered the room, were startled at her excessive paleness and agitation; but Clara was at no loss to account for it, when she read the paper which Eleanor gave her. It was now Eleanor's painful task to explain the whole business to her guardian, conjuring him to save her, if he could, from appearing in a court of justice; which she thought might be prevented if Sir Richard was informed that she must on oath unsay the strongest part of what she had advanced, and therefore must injure rather than serve his cause.

"Have you then been so base," cried Morley, "as to say, and thereby injure an innocent man, what you cannot swear? I blush for you, and have a mind to leave you to the public disgrace which you merit."

Clara could have said, "She merits not disgrace according to your own principles, sir; for you know you always say *there is no harm in a little while lying;* and you saw no harm in Eleanor's lies to Mrs. Somerville."

"You forget, sir, I did not mean to injure Mr. Bellamy," replied Eleanor, in a faltering voice.

"No, nor Mrs. Harrison," observed Clara, "and yet you see what unexpected mischief may attend *any* deviation from truth."

"There! don't preach, Clara," cried Morley; "but let us see what is to be done in this bad business."

At this moment a letter was brought to Mr. Morley, from Sir Richard Mildred, stating that, on finding Mr. Bellamy was candidate for the place of master to a free school at —— in Surrey, he had thought it his duty to

write to those in whose hands the appointment of it was vested, to say "that Mr. Bellamy, though a man of letters and learning, was not a fit person to be entrusted with such a charge, as he had treated a son of his cruelly, and inflicted on him such corporal punishment as no master ought to inflict for any crime whatever; *he having actually dragged him by the hair of the head into the middle of the room; and that the hair had been literally torn off in more places than one.*"

In consequence of this letter—a libel as the law called it (it having been written and circulated)—Mr. Bellamy was refused the appointment; and had therefore brought an action for damages against Sir Richard, who was consequently obliged to summon Miss Musgrave as his witness; and he concluded the subpœna would be served that day, as the assizes would commence the day after the next, at Guildford, the county town.

"Well, this will be no agreeable surprise to my poor nephew, Miss Musgrave," observed Morley.

"O, sir! must he know it?" cried Eleanor.

"How can it be concealed, if you appear in a court?"

In bitter regrets on Eleanor's side, in very severe animadversions on her guardian's, and in fruitless attempts from Clara to console Eleanor and pacify Morley, while she urged their setting off immediately in search of Sir Richard, whose letter was dated "Guildford," the day passed.

The next day brought a still more perplexing letter to Eleanor, from Davenant; in which he informed her that the friend whom he had known in India was a friend of hers, Mr. Bellamy; and that on his arrival at his house he found him in a difficult situation out of which he had fortunately remembered it was in her power to deliver him, as she was, he had since recollected, a witness of the whole of the alleged assault on Master Mildred; and as he hoped, by a private examination of witnesses, and by referring the business to arbitration, to prevent the matter from coming to a lawsuit, Mr. Bellamy earnestly requested her to set off with her guardian and friend for Guildford; that by bearing her testimony in his defence she might convince Sir Richard of his error, and induce him to retract the charge that had prevented his election; which, however, he trusted would still take place, if the accusation against him was gotten rid of.

"Well," said Morley, "you are really, Miss Eleanor, like the bat in the fable now; and have the singular, and I must say dishonourable distinction of being subpœnaed on both sides, as a friend to be relied on! O my poor high-souled nephew! what will he feel when he hears this! But come, let us order horses, and set off for Guildford." And Eleanor, overwhelmed with a variety of painful feelings, found herself very soon on the road to Surrey.

The journey was not made more pleasant to her by the observations which occasionally escaped her guardian, who could not help owning that he thought the present a much worse business than that of Harrison's, and that he feared his nephew would *never get over it.* Eleanor *wished* to be able to say, "Then let him break with me and welcome!" But a sense of conscious degradation kept down her pride of heart, and she remained silent and unhappy.

Clara meanwhile was not equally unhappy, but she was equally silent. She too thought that Davenant would be shocked at this new proof of Eleanor's laxity of principle, as it appeared to her; and she felt that he had an opportunity of breaking, if he wished it, an engagement which, she was sure, would be to him the source of future unhappiness; and disinterestedly even, without any view to herself, Clara could not grieve at the probable result of this affair, especially as she was convinced Eleanor did not love Davenant; and she even suspected that, if she loved any one, it was a Captain Lethbridge, a lieutenant in the guards.

When they reached Guildford, Morley inquired at the first inn to which they drove, whether Sir Richard Mildred was there, and they found that he was; and while Eleanor, nearly fainting, threw herself on Clara's shoulder, Morley alighted and went into the house. He soon came back, to say that he found Mr. Bellamy with his friends and lawyers, and Sir Richard with his, were then met to settle matters amicably if possible, and prevent the business from going into a court of justice; that they were only just assembled, and that Eleanor could not have arrived at a more fortunate moment.

"But who," thought Eleanor, "are Mr. Bellamy's friends? Surely Davenant is one of them." And her knees trembled under her so much, that she could scarcely walk, though supported by Clara.

As Morley expected, when he desired to be shown into Sir Richard's apartment, he was told that he was engaged, and could not be spoken with. But having desired the waiter to say, that Mr. Morley and Miss Musgrave were waiting for admission, they heard Sir Richard and Mr. Bellamy both exclaim, "Miss Musgrave! How fortunate!" in a tone of joy; for each thought that her evidence would be favourable to him and his cause; and this consciousness did not render Eleanor's trembling limbs more steady as she entered the room.

As soon as Davenant saw her, he ran to meet her; and observing her excessive paleness and agitation, he tenderly said in a low voice, "Dear girl, how kind it was in you to come so soon! But why this emotion? Re-

member, you are not in a court of justice, but amongst friends." And as he drew her arm under his, while Clara supported her on the other side, he said within himself, "I did not think she had had so much shrinking delicacy of feeling."

Sir Richard rose on Eleanor's entrance, and *for him*, made her a most gracious bow. But Bellamy eagerly took her hand and said, "Thanks, dear Miss Musgrave; now *you* are come, all will go well with me."

"Now, Mr. Lennox," said Sir Richard pompously to his counsel, "now, sir, you will hear my complete justification; as this young lady, and a most respectable young lady, is my sole and sufficient witness."

"*Your* witness!" cried Bellamy; "she is *mine*, sir; *I* sent for her, sir."

"And I *subpœnaed* her, sir," said Sir Richard in a thundering voice, while Bellamy looked at Eleanor with surprise and suspicion; and Davenant whispered her, "That man is certainly mad;—what does he mean?"

"But, sir, I have the honour to call Miss Musgrave my friend," cried Bellamy; "and as she witnessed all that passed at the moment of the pretended assault, I requested her to come hither—and here she is."

"Mr. Bellamy," said Sir Richard, "I must still repeat my assurance, that though you might *send* for Miss Musgrave, I *subpœnaed* her. Answer, madam, did I not?"

"You did, sir," she replied in a voice scarcely audible from emotion.

"You hear," observed Sir Richard; "Now then put a few questions to the lady, Mr. Lennox;" and Davenant, involuntarily withdrawing his arm from Eleanor's, whose confusion now seemed to him to look more like shame than modesty, awaited what was to follow in painful alarm.

To his first questions, such as,—Was she with Lady Sophia at Mr. Bellamy's on such a day? and so on, she answered in the affirmative; but when he asked her whether she did not see Mr. Bellamy drag Master Mildred by the hair of the head into the middle of the room, she replied in an audible voice, and in an impressive manner, "No, I DID NOT."

"You did not!" vociferated Sir Richard; "Recollect yourself, madam, and do not force me to regret that we are not in court, and that you are not examined on your oath, madam."

"You are severe, sir," cried Davenant; "I shall not allow this lady to be insulted."

"Well then, madam," observed Mr. Lennox, "if you did *not* see that, what *did* you see?"

"Through the window I saw Mr. Bellamy drag Master Mildred into the middle of the room."

"Ay, through the window only; therefore it might still be by the hair of the head."

"I hope I may be allowed to say, sir, that the window being quite open, I could see as well as if I had been in the room, and Mr. Bellamy did not *touch* Master Mildred's head."

"But did you not, madam," said Sir Richard, "tell me a different story?"

"I confirmed a different story by my 'Yes,' and I own it to my shame."

"And, madam, did you not say you saw marks of hair having been torn off, on Master Mildred's head; and the marks of fingers on his cheek?"

"Yes, sir."

"And did not Augustus say that Mr. Bellamy had done it?—and did not you believe him?"

"No;—nor did I ever say that I believed him. I believed then, and I do now, that the hair was torn off and the blow given by a little boy whom Mr. Bellamy also dragged by the arm into the middle of the room, whose ear was then bleeding from a bite which Master Mildred had given him."

"And pray, madam," said Sir Richard, "if I am to believe that you are speaking the truth now, what was your motive for telling me a falsehood? You know it was from my reliance on your integrity that I took my son from that admirable master, in whom I had before such confidence; and I think, madam, the injured Mr. Bellamy called you *his friend*."

"He did me, I own, more honour than I deserve, sir," replied Eleanor, bursting into tears; "but I was then and am now his most sincere friend, and never thought that I should seem to be his enemy."

"Explain, madam."

"Sir, Lady Sophia with many tears and entreaties conjured me to say as she said, and to confirm her declaration that she saw Mr. Bellamy drag her son into the middle of the room by the hair of the head, as she declared that it would kill her to have her son go back to that school; and she knew, sir, you would not believe her unless I confirmed what she asserted; therefore, sir, as Mr. Bellamy told her she would do him a favour by taking her son away, I thought I was obliging, not hurting, my respected friend, by saying 'Yes,' when I ought in conscience, I own, to have said 'No.'"

"So then," whispered Morley to Davenant, "it was only a *white lie* at last; no malice in it."

"Only a white lie!" murmured out Davenant with a deep sigh.

"And what you have now said, madam, you are willing to confirm on oath, are you?"

"I am; nay I implore, sir, to be put on my oath."

"Be it so then, madam; I am a magistrate and can receive it."

Davenant and Morley were now each going angrily to interfere, when Clara pressed forward and begged to be heard. "Let me observe, Sir Richard," she said, "that you must know little of human nature, if you do not see

that my poor friend's present assertions bear all the marks of genuine truth, and also of genuine compunction, for having been led, through kind but mistaken compliance with Lady Sophia's maternal fondness, to confirm a lie put as it were into her mouth, and one of which she could not foresee the painful consequences. Under these circumstances, sir, allow me to say, that accepting the oath which Miss Musgrave, in humble and affecting contrition of spirit, has offered to take, would be an insult, sir, to her feelings and character, which both as a man and a gentleman you ought not to offer, and which I think too highly of you to believe you capable of persisting in."

A murmur of approbation now ran round the room; and Eleanor hid her face, bathed in grateful tears, on Clara's shoulder; while Sir Richard himself seemed awed by "the grave rebuke severe in youthful beauty."

"Well, madam, well," he replied, "I will not press an oath on Miss Musgrave; but I wish now I had attended more to what you said."

"What did I say, sir?"

"When I told you this unpleasant affair, on which your conscious friend had been silent to you, you doubted the truth of what you heard; and when Lady Sophia exclaimed, 'Can I doubt the evidence of my senses?' you replied, 'Perhaps not; but in such a case I should doubt the evidence of mine.' And then you spoke warmly in praise of Mr. Bellamy; but not more, I am now convinced, than he deserved. Well, gentlemen," continued Sir Richard, "I believe you will agree with me that there is now only one thing for me to do, and that is, to ask Mr. Bellamy's forgiveness, thus, for the injury which I have done him without any malignant intention, but simply from a mistaken sense of duty; and to offer not only to wait personally on each gentleman in whom the appointment of the master of the school is vested, and assure him that Mr. Bellamy is wholly innocent of the charge I brought against him, and that in all respects he is most deserving of trust—but to make any public apology that Mr. Bellamy may desire. For I have," gentlemen," added he, "deserved humiliation, if this be humiliation, for having had the weakness to act once against my strongest convictions, and to place confidence and trust in that frail being called woman;—for, whether from frivolity, malignity, fear, or original weakness of mind, women are usually false, hollow-hearted, and *mendacious*."

"My dear sir," said Mr. Bellamy, kindly tendering him his hand, "all I require of you is to speak to the gentlemen in question; for, as I found your testimony *against* me so powerful and so pernicious, I am sure that your testimony *in my favour* will be equally as effective and serviceable. And now let all past unpleasantness be forgotten; though I am much inclined to throw down the gauntlet to you still, in behalf of that sex which you have so cruelly aspersed. To err, is the tendency of us all; but to repent and make amends for past error gracefully and honourably, is the province only of a few. And I must say that my young friend here, has by her recent conduct wiped away from my mind all traces of her offence."

This well-meant speech was too much for the harassed feelings of Eleanor, who was now forced to be carried up-stairs in a strong hysteric, much to the relief of Sir Richard, who was thus saved the necessity of replying, as he did not see, nor indeed did Davenant, any merit in Eleanor's having spoken the truth, when infamy and perjury were the frightful alternative.

What Davenant's feelings were I will not pretend to describe; for all Eleanor's beauty, graces and attractions were lost to him, in his consciousness of her utter disregard of habitual truth. Indeed, such was his mental conflict, that he resolved not to see Eleanor again till he was more master of himself. He therefore, as soon as he heard that she was better, told Bellamy he must return to his own house directly.

For this sudden departure he had also another reason; he dared not trust himself to hear the praises of Clara's spirited and generous defence of Eleanor. He dared not listen to commendation of Clara, from such a man as Bellamy, who loved, he found, to talk of her, at a moment when his feelings were so roused against Eleanor. And spite of his friend's entreaties, that he would at least stay to dine with him to meet Sir Richard, he wrote a hurried note to his uncle, and left the town.

As Eleanor expected this, she was not so much affected by it; and her journey back to London, supported as she was by the kind approbation of her guardian and of Clara, was much pleasanter than her journey to Guildford.

The next day and the day after passed away without one line from Davenant. Another and another succeeded, and still he neither came nor wrote. Eleanor therefore resolved to write to him, but her courage failed her, and she eagerly and earnestly conjured Clara to plead her cause with her alienated lover, as she had reason to think him.

Clara declined the office, feeling as she did so for the degradation of Eleanor. But at length, finding that Eleanor was distressed by some well-founded fears, perhaps, that Davenant attributed her resolve to speak the truth more to his presence, and to his interference in Bellamy's favour, than to any other motive, she consented to write to him; and her letter ran thus:—

"Your absence and your silence, dear sir, are at this moment particularly wounding to one who is a severe sufferer from the trial that

she has lately undergone, and under which I must say that she acquitted herself well.

"Her agony was great when she received the subpœna and believed herself likely to appear in a court of justice, to deny upon oath what she had been led to assent to in the weak and careless kindness of a hurried moment. But when she received your letter, and found you were not only to be acquainted with, but to witness her humiliation, I thought we should scarcely have been able to get her to Guildford composed enough to go through the task required of her.

"And you, by neither *writing* nor *coming*, seem to realize, unhappy girl! the worst of her fears.

"I have only to add, that if the *fear* of *displeasing* you has such power over her health and her spirits, what may not the *wish* to *please* you, have over her future conduct?

"I am, dear sir, yours most sincerely,

"Clara Delancy."

When Clara had finished this letter, she feared that she had said too much; but when she looked at the wretched Eleanor, she thought she had hardly said enough; and her guardian thought so too; he therefore wrote thus himself;—

"Dear nephew—If you neither write nor come in a day or two, the poor Eleanor will have a typhus; she neither eats, drinks, nor sleeps, and looks like a ghost,—and I am not sure she has not one already. You are very hard on a *little white lie*, spoken to serve one friend and not meant to injure another.

"I am your affectionate but distressed uncle,

"R. Morley."

Clara's letter did, indeed, bring Davenant to London, but not his uncle's; as he did not believe that distress of mind *infallibly* ended in a typhus (as his uncle called it.) But *she* had said all that could be said for Eleanor; and he came the more readily, because he saw that she was so *ready* to say it—so *evidently desirous*, he thought, that *he should marry Eleanor*. Little was he conscious of Clara's magnanimity!

Well, he came. His vanity and his better feelings were gratified to see how his absence and silence had depressed and altered Eleanor; and how soon she recovered her looks and her spirits when he spoke affectionately to her, and told her he trusted that her late painful experience would be a warning to her through life.

"That, and your example," replied Eleanor.

And Davenant, pleased with her humility, resolved to forget everything but her beauty and her tenderness.

He did seem to remember these alone, and preparations for the marriage went on as usual; still Clara saw a note to Eleanor in the handwriting of Captain Lethbridge, and saw one lying on the hall table to him, in Eleanor's handwriting, where the footman who was to take it had laid it while he was drawing on his gloves.

"This is very strange, and, I think, wrong," thought Clara; but she did not mention the circumstance to Eleanor.

One night when they had a box at the Opera, and Mr. Morley said he was too unwell to go, Eleanor, complaining of headache, declared her wish to stay at home to amuse her guardian; and spite of her lover's entreaties, she persisted in her resolution; but as the Opera was a favourite one of his, she insisted on Davenant's going; and a *chaperone* for Clara being easily procured, Davenant, Clara, and another lady, drove to the Opera.

They had not been there above half an hour when some one knocked at the door of the box; and on Davenant's opening it, Clara saw that it was Captain Lethbridge. He looked perturbed; and noticing no one but Clara, he came up to her and said, "Where is Eleanor?"

"My guardian is unwell; and as she has a headache she chose to stay at home with him."

"Indeed," said he in a low voice, "indeed! kind soul! But are you sure that is her real reason for staying at home?"

"She said so."

"*I* believe it was fear of *me*."

"You know best what cause she has."

"But I will soon know the truth," he replied. So saying, he left the box, throwing the door after him with violence as he went out.

"Who is that rude and violent man?" said Davenant.

"A Captain Lethbridge, a rejected lover of Eleanor's," replied Clara; "therefore his oddity is excusable."

"Certainly; but it did require some apology."

Nothing unusual else passed that evening, and the party left the house before the last ballet ended, that Morley might not be disturbed by their late arrival. Davenant too, at Clara's desire, did not come in, as she concluded Morley and Eleanor were gone to bed; but she found them up, and playing piquet.

"Well, sir," said Clara, "I conclude you are better, by seeing you up, and so employed! No doubt your agreeable companion has done you good?"

"Yes, since she came to me I have been better; but she was so long with her mantua-maker that I have seen very little of her."

Clara now looked at Eleanor; and seeing her blush deeply, she was convinced that she had not been with her mantua-maker, but with Captain Lethbridge, whom probably she had stayed at home to avoid, and who had come to the house and insisted on seeing her; and a number of vague fears took possession of her mind. Morley now challenged her to a game

of piquet; and Eleanor, afraid that Clara suspected the truth, stole away to bed to avoid interrogatories.

As Eleanor did not accompany her lover and Clara to the Opera, on the Saturday, and as a new and very fine Opera was to be played on the Tuesday following, Eleanor was desirous of going. Davenant was unable to procure a good box; but as the ladies were above the little pride of not enduring to sit in the pit, Clara and Eleanor, accompanied by Davenant, a married lady, and Colonel O'Byrne, went early, and got excellent places in the sixth row of the pit. The party all sat in the same row; Davenant at the end next Fop's Alley, Eleanor next him, then the chaperone, then Clara, and then Colonel O'Byrne; who had raised himself not a little in Clara's good opinion, by the relation he had given her of Davenant's conduct to his brother in India, and by the graceful and affecting manner in which he delivered it.

Nothing worth narrating occurred during the first act, or first ballet; but at the beginning of the second, his cheek flushed with wine, and a sort of saucy despair in his manner, Charles Fielding forced his way through a crowd of young men, and took a vacant seat behind Eleanor. Clara did not see him, as she was wholly absorbed in listening to the music.

"How are you, Miss Musgrave?" said he, "have you waltzed lately? Oh, no, I forgot, you never waltz. I waltz, sir! I never waltzed in my life!" mimicking Eleanor, whose alarmed looks now caught the attention of Davenant, as he turned round from speaking to a gentleman. And Davenant immediately recognised Fielding; and seeing him speaking in her ear, he remembered what she had said of him, and was resolved to prevent his further annoyance of her, even though he might be mad for the time being and therefore excusable.

"I hate lying, it is such a mean vice," said he; "do not you hate it, Miss Musgrave?"

"I do; and impertinence also."

"What! dare you say this to me?" cried Fielding, but in a subdued voice, and grasping her arms,—"to me! to whom you were forced to confide the reasons of your mean falsehood! to me! the confidant of your petty disingenuousness? I tell you, Eleanor Musgrave, I would not marry you if you would offer me your lovely self and large fortune; for though you are as handsome as an angel, you lie like a chambermaid." He spoke these last words so loud that Davenant heard them; and leaning down, he whispered in his ear that he wished to speak to him in the lobby.

"Sir!" replied Fielding, surveying him with a look of pity.

Davenant rose soon after, and said he must go and speak to a gentleman; and Eleanor, who had not heard the whisper, was relieved by his leaving her. But when she saw Fielding rise also, and saw Davenant take his arm, when Fielding reached the passage next the orchestra, and walk away with him, the truth burst upon her mind at once; and conjuring the chaperone to change seats with her, she told Clara all she had seen and all she feared. Clara was equally alarmed with herself, and entreated Colonel O'Byrne to follow and see what was really passing; and he instantly obeyed her. Poor Clara was little conscious that she had sent on her errand the very man Davenant most wished to see.

When they had reached the lobby, Davenant coolly but firmly said that he had a right, as he was soon to be the legal protector of Miss Musgrave, to insist that Fielding would never again presume to address Miss Musgrave in language so false and injurious to her.

"False! false! Mr. Davenant — Charles Fielding utter any thing that is false!"

"If you allude, sir, to Miss Musgrave's refusal to waltz with you, I must tell you, sir, that she declares she never did waltz in her life; and therefore you deceive yourself when you think she told you a falsehood, and refused merely because she would not waltz with *you*."

"I suppose, sir, she would say I am also mistaken, when I assert that she came to me after you left her, and apologized for the lie that she had told me; — nevertheless, I do assert it."

"'Tis false, sir; she could not do such a thing; and you are saying this in revenge for her refusing to waltz with you," cried Davenant, wholly thrown off his guard.

"False, sir! Do you accuse me not only of lying, sir, but of lying for the mean purpose of revenge?—Then it is *my* turn to demand satisfaction."

"And you shall have it, sir; though I must say, that the man who can sport in any way with the good name of a lady, is scarcely worthy to meet an honourable man in the field."

"Sir! Mr. Davenant! you presume on your wealth, sir, because you know that I am poor; but to-morrow, sir, your boasted riches may avail you nothing."

"Nothing, indeed!" cried Davenant; "but I deny your charge."

"Well, sir, name the time and place."

"To-morrow, near the Serpentine river, at six o'clock in the morning."

"Be it so." At this moment O'Byrne joined them.

"You are the man I wish to see," cried Davenant."

"And I came in search of you; sent by the dear frightened young ladies."

"Pshaw! how unlucky that they should suspect any thing!"

Davenant then told O'Byrne what had

passed, and asked him to be his second; and O'Byrne complied; being convinced, as a gallant man, that a duel must be *fixed* to take place, whether it did take place or not. And Fielding seeing a gentleman of his acquaintance, requested the same favour of him.

"But now," said O'Byrne, "how shall we contrive to blind the ladies?"

"Let us — Mr. Davenant and myself, I mean," said Fielding, "enter the pit arm-in-arm, and speak together as if we were friends."

"And do you meanwhile," said Davenant, "go before us, O'Byrne, and say we are coming on the best terms possible."

So said, so done. And Clara and Eleanor (seeing them arm-in-arm, and smiling as they entered,) were completely deceived. Fielding then went to another part of the pit, and Davenant left them again, to speak to a lady in her box; where he remained, and in sight of them, the rest of the evening, to avoid inquiries. O'Byrne, on pretence of wanting to speak to a friend just going abroad, took care to leave them also, to escape questions.

Nor did either of the gentlemen return till the last ballet was ended, much to the vexation of the ladies, who wished to get into the passage-room before the crowd assembled; because, if they did not do so, they knew very well it would be two in the morning, probably, before they should get home.

This was what the gentlemen wanted; as Davenant wished for an excuse to avoid entering the carriage. But their long absence, and their not returning till the ladies were unavoidably forced to encounter the crowd, which Davenant knew they feared and abhorred, gave Clara and Eleanor painful confirmation of the truth. And when after great difficulty they reached the carriage at last, Davenant's refusal to accompany them, on account of the lateness of the hour and a bad headache, put the finishing stroke to their suspicions; and they returned home in unspeakable distress of mind.

Clara had found an opportunity of asking Davenant what he could have to say to Fielding.

"Oh," said he, "I have been interested in him, and wished to know him ever since he sung that song so feelingly which you, I am told, inspired."

"I think you will have a better reason for such a wish," replied Clara, blushing, "when I tell you that a widowed sister and her four children live with him, who are chiefly dependent on him for support."

"Indeed, indeed, poor fellow!" cried Davenant, starting and turning pale. And Clara's fears were thence so completely roused, that his subsequent conduct, stated above, easily increased them into agonizing certainty.

But what could they do?—Morley was gone to bed ill, and they could not venture to disturb him, as his physicians had ordered him to be perfectly quiet. While they were thus consulting, and doing nothing, a letter was brought to Clara from a friend of hers and Eleanor's, which raised their state of apparently helpless suffering, to its climax.

"I write in haste and trepidation; but write I must. The Colonel, (meaning her husband) who is, you know, not yet known to Mr. Davenant even personally, overheard him and Charles Fielding in high altercation last night in the lobby at the Opera, and this is the substance of what they said." [She then gave it verbatim.] "He could not interfere with any propriety himself; but he thought you might, if you knew the circumstance to-night, and by means of your uncle prevent the meeting. The Colonel had some thoughts of speaking to Fielding, whom he knows a little; but when he followed him with that intention, he saw him take his second by the arm, and say with a sort of mad gayety, 'Come, Frank! let us go to a coffee-house, and sup together;—it is not worth while to go to bed, and my will has long been made; so let us drown care in the heart-enlivening bowl.' He then dragged his friend along, and they disappeared amongst the carriages."

This letter put an end to Clara's only hope, —which was, that Fielding, when he had slept himself sober, would be willing to apologize for aught that he had said derogatory to Eleanor. But now a night passed not in sleep, but in an increase of excitement, would she knew add to his irritability, and that no apology from him could be expected. But there was one way to induce Davenant to apologize, and that would do as well—But was it practicable? And while she convinced herself it was, she thanked Heaven, and begged Eleanor to cease wringing her hands, and walking up and down the room,—and listen to her patiently.

"You see," she said, "that as Fielding means to drink instead of sleep all night, there is no chance of his apologizing when the meeting takes place; therefore, unless we can prevent it, fight they must."

"And how should we prevent it? However, there is comfort in the idea that Fielding's hand will be so unsteady he can't kill Davenant."

"But Davenant may kill *him*;—and is there any comfort in *that* idea? Poor Charles! and poor Ellen his widowed sister!" said Clara, bursting into tears. "How can you bear to contemplate the possibility of Charles's danger, even should Davenant be safe?"

"Clara," cried Eleanor," is it possible that you love Fielding?"

"Love him! No; but is there no such thing, do you think, as pure disinterested humanity? O Eleanor! there is one way to prevent all danger to both, and you can save them."

"I!" said Eleanor, turning pale.

"Yes—by telling the truth to this generous

man, who is going to risk his life in defence of your veracity; and by owning you *did* utter the falsehood of which Fielding accuses you. Have the courage to write to Davenant, owning that poor Charles has waltzed with you,—and Davenant will not think any apology too much."

"Absurd! how could I get a letter to him time enough?"

"My own footman, you know, is to be trusted; and he will go, I am sure, and watch at Davenant's door till he comes out to keep his appointment;—so you see nothing is easier."

"But it is not so easy for me to write the letter."

"No? Not to save the life of your lover and poor Charles? Eleanor, Eleanor, you have a heart, however it is choked up by weakness. Think how that heart will be wrung should Fielding fall, and fall your victim, as he would undoubtedly be, when you hear the sobs of his sister and her children, and hear them ask in vain for that only friend of which you have deprived them."

"I can then be their friend myself."

"Yes, but remorse will prey upon you still, Eleanor. And, on the contrary, suppose Davenant falls — will you ever know peace again? When you remember, that an ill-placed confidence in your superiority to the meanness attributed to you, has been the cause of his dying a violent death in the prime of his days—can you bear to witness—?" Clara could not go on; the idea of Davenant's death was too insupportable, and she covered her face with her hands.

Clara had done wrong; she had used an offensive word—the word *meanness;* and Eleanor resented it;—her other lies were respectable compared to this, and she knew it; for this was wholly the result of selfish fear for herself—the fear of sinking in the estimation of Davenant; and in angry, sullen silence she listened to Clara.

"Well, Eleanor, are you convinced that there is only one step to be taken to preserve the lives perhaps of two individuals, to call them by no tenderer name, which you have endangered?"

"They may not be in danger; and I am not prepared for such a self-sacrifice."

"Self-sacrifice! Self-exaltation it will turn out to be."

Clara paused, awaiting her answer; but she spoke not.

"Well then, Miss Musgrave," cried Clara, "if you will not write, I will. I will tell the whole truth; and when I say that I have seen you waltz, and that Fielding has not accused you unjustly, you know Mr. Davenant will believe me instantly."

"You *dare* not do this," exclaimed Eleanor; "or if you do, beware of your motives, Miss Delancy; you will act from a wish to break off my marriage with Davenant, and not from a disinterested desire of preserving lives."

"Has my recent interference proved me inclined to such baseness? Did my letter into Surrey prove it? Ungrateful girl! But I care not what motives you attribute to me—my duty is an obvious one, and I will perform it." She then instantly sat down to write; when Eleanor, seeing she was resolute, thought it would be better for her to make a merit of necessity; and snatching the pen from Clara, she declared, if it must be so, she would write herself. And she wrote as follows:—

"Risk not your precious life, and lift not, I charge you, your hand against poor Fielding, in defence of my injuries; for he has *only spoken the truth.* I have often waltzed, and *he has waltzed with me;* but the fear of sinking in your esteem, which was already become as precious to me as my existence, urged me, in the sudden flutter and alarm of the moment, to deny the fact as I did.

"Humiliating as this avowal is, I hesitate not to make it; and I implore you not to let me have endured the agony of it in vain.

"Oh! regard my fault with the eyes of mercy, not of justice—and pity

"The repentant

"ELEANOR MUSGRAVE."

This letter Clara intrusted to the care of her confidential servant, who had lived many years in the family; and he promised to take his station near Mr. Davenant's door, at four in the morning, and wait there till he came out. But neither Eleanor nor Clara could go to bed; and they remained together, walking up and down the apartments, to await the return of the servant.

Davenant meanwhile passed a sleepless and restless night. His will was made, and all his worldly afairs nearly settled — therefore they did not burden his mind; but the idea of acting contrary to his principles, and depriving a fellow-creature of life, did; and when he remembered that if Fielding fell, his sister and her children would lose their chief support, he shuddered as if he were going to commit a terrible crime. And was he not going to commit one? Were not the words—"Thou shalt not kill"—words of meaning, and words to be obeyed?

The result of his reflections and of his supplications that night was, not to fight with Fielding; but he resolved to go notwithstanding to the place of meeting, and try to pacify the wounded pride of his antagonist. "And *if* after all," said he to himself, "Fielding has only told *the truth?*"

The thought was misery; but it was only too natural that it should pass his mind. He also resolved, in order to avoid any temptation to break his resolution, to go unarmed. And having thus determined, he threw himself,

dressed as he was, on his bed, and was able to sleep.

By five o'clock Clara's servant saw O'Byrne knock at Davenant's door, who rose himself to let him in. What passed between them it is not necessary for me to relate. But O'Byrne seemed at length satisfied, (though a high-spirited Irishman, an officer, and a most gallant one too) that Davenant was right in his determination to *try* to make up the affair. But he did not think him right in leaving his pistols behind; "However," thought he, "there are mine ready, if called for"—and they entered the street.

Clara's servant instantly presented Davenant with the letter.

"Pshaw!" said he, "I have no time to read letters now; and this is a strange hour to read one, Benson."

"Yes, sir; but notwithstanding, you must read it now."

"Must!"

"Yes; excuse my freedom, sir; but I have promised my dear lady, Miss Delancy, (whom I have left more dead than alive at home,) that I would not leave you till I had seen you read it."

"Well then, as she wishes it, I will."

He read it therefore, and almost groaned as he did so; for, though he had suspected that Fielding might possibly have spoken the truth, he shrunk with horror from this conviction of the fact; and staggering against the door, he hid his face for a moment.

But recovering himself, he took the arm of the wondering O'Byrne, saying, "We shall be late;" then turning to Benson, he desired him to tell his lady she had nothing to fear, that all danger was now at an end, as he knew his duty.

"Any message to Miss Musgrave?"

"None."

Benson then took his leave, and Davenant and O'Byrne proceeded to the Park.

Fielding and his second were already there; and Davenant beheld with emotion the agony depicted in the countenance of the former, spite of his assumed firmness.

"You are late, sir," said Fielding; "but before we proceed to business, let me intrust to your care, Mr. Davenant, in case I fall, this letter to Miss Delancy. It tells a secret which she must have long suspected, and which at *such* a moment I may venture to tell *even to her;* and it also commends to her well-known kindness the dear ones whom my death may make friendless. And now, sir, I have done, and am ready."

"But *I* am not," said Davenant in a choked voice; and feeling irresistibly attracted towards the silent, *despairing lover of Clara Delancy.*

To be brief; Davenant, taking Fielding aside, as he did not like to expose Eleanor's conduct to O'Byrne, made such ample apologies to Fielding, that he could not but cordially accept them; and then, in justice to Eleanor, he put her letter into his hands.

"I believe Clara urged her to do this," was in Fielding's *thoughts;* but he did not utter them, and he returned the letter in silence.

"We had all better go to bed again now, I fancy," said Davenant. And they proceeded together, Davenant taking Fielding's arm, and O'Byrne his.

Davenant would not have been sorry if O'Byrne had left him alone with Fielding, but that warm-hearted man experienced, like himself, a feeling of strong interest in the lover of Clara Delancy, as he more than suspected him to be, and wished to see more of him. He was also sure that he must be a *hopeless* lover as well as himself, while Davenant remained unmarried; since his eye, rendered penetrating by jealousy, had discovered, though Davenant's had not, that the preference which he would have given half his fortune to excite, Davenant had excited unconsciously, and without intending to do it. And till Davenant was indeed another's, and Clara's principles were called upon to combat her inclination, he was very sure she could never love any other man.—O'Byrne also saw that Davenant was not in love with Eleanor, and that he greatly admired Clara; nor could he at all reconcile to himself the present situation of affairs; especially, as with all his delicate consideration for Eleanor, Davenant was not able to conceal entirely from O'Byrne, that she had acted ill, and was the cause of the projected duel.

"Let her look to it," said O'Byrne to himself, as they went to the scene of action; "or she will never be Mrs. Davenant."

The three gentlemen walked some time in silence down Piccadilly, at the bottom of which Fielding, starting from his reverie, said,—"I fear, gentlemen, I have led you much out of your way,—here then, I will take my leave, as I am going to Parliament-street."

"It was my wish," replied Davenant, "to accompany you, as the morning is fine, and I am not inclined for bed myself, though I recommend it to you."

And O'Byrne, professing himself equally disinclined to sleep, declared he would go also, adding, "for indeed, Mr. Fielding, I wish to be better acquainted with you."

Davenant thought that Fielding did not much like his companions should accompany him any further; still, from the difficulty of retracting his determination, he continued to go on;—and they found themselves at Fielding's lodging, which was at the entrance of Parliament-street, before he was aware of it. It was in a small court, and consequently seemed a situation chosen for economy's sake, as well as for its vicinity to the public office in which Fielding had accepted a place, as he was not rich enough to pursue the study of the law, when his widowed sister and her orphans became in a degree dependent on him.

Mrs. O'Donovan, Fielding's sister, was the widow of an Irish officer, who had fallen in the service, leaving her with four children and nothing but her pension from government to maintain them. But in her brother she found a protector, and her orphans a father. Consequently, this kind brother possessed the grateful affections of her widowed heart; and her children (amongst whom was a beautiful girl of seventeen) looked up to Fielding with an almost filial love.

No wonder then that his absence from home during a whole night, should have filled them with almost insupportable anxiety, and that they should have sat up together—sometimes calming each other's fears, sometimes exciting them,—nor that they should be watching at the door of the house for this beloved being's return, when he and his companions appeared at the gate of the court.

The moment they saw Fielding, who on discovering them involuntarily rushed forward to meet them, his sister—speechless with overwhelming emotions—threw herself on his neck; while his niece hung fondly on his arm, and, as the tears coursed each other down her lovely face, sobbed out (with an Irish accent, which reached to the very heart of O'Byrne), "And is it your own dear sister and niece, my darling uncle, that you could be after afflicting in this way? Oh! will I ever forgive you, dear?"

"And the sweet creature is my own countrywoman, too," whispered O'Byrne to Davenant, who, like him, did not see this scene unmoved. But beautiful as Mary O'Donovan was, he was not at that moment sensible of her beauty. The idea that his arm had nearly been raised against this beloved brother and uncle, was uppermost in his mind; accompanied by an eager desire to befriend, if he could, the interesting family before him.

But all his speculations were soon suspended, and even O'Byrne's tender admiration; for Fielding (overcome by his night's sleepless excess and anxiety, and the emotion occasioned by the sight of his sister and her daughter) turned suddenly faint, and would have fallen, had not Davenant and O'Byrne rushed forward and caught him in their arms, while the terrified mother and daughter led the way to a parlour, where they laid him on a sofa, and assisted in endeavours to revive him.

They soon succeeded; and when he recovered his recollection, a violent burst of tears, which he shed on the bosom of his sister, relieved his own oppressed heart, and quieted theirs.

"He will be better now," cried O'Byrne; "be easy, dear souls, he is alive and well, and we will leave him to tell you all in his own way."

"Then there is something to tell," exclaimed Mrs. O'Donovan, while Davenant vainly tried to answer her, vexed at the alarm which O'Byrne had so unnecessarily excited.

"Oh, yes!" answered O'Byrne, recollecting himself, "there is something very agreeable to tell, as I hope Mr. Fielding has made two new friends to-night, in this gentleman and myself; and I am sure I should be both proud and obliged to be allowed to pay my compliments here again at a more convenient hour, and more suitable opportunity."

"And so should I," said Davenant, taking Fielding's shaking hand and pressing it kindly; "but now, with many apologies to these ladies for this involuntary intrusion, we take our leave."

"Good bye, my dear fellow," said O'Byrne, also shaking him by the hand; "and mark me, Mr. Fielding,—if you ever again presume to fill those beautiful eyes with such big tears you shall answer it to me, sir; and I don't care if I blow out your brains myself."

He then bowed most profoundly low to the ladies; and, looking back at Mary as long as he could see her, he followed Davenant into the street.

They walked some way in silence; but Davenant was recalled to present objects, by O'Byrne's suddenly exclaiming—"But oh, she is too young!"

"Who is too young?" said Davenant, looking earnestly at him.

O'Byrne blushed and turned away his head, uttering, "Pshaw! nobody in particular; it is only a silly way that I have of talking in my sleep, as it were."

"She is certainly uncommonly handsome," replied Davenant, smiling.

"She!—Who?" asked the conscious O'Byrne; then added, with a deep sigh, "Ah! my dear friend, I see you have caught me. But now, do own that *she* (for I don't know her name) is very like Miss Delancy."

Davenant, though in no humour for laughing, could not resist this attempt of O'Byrne's to reconcile to himself his infidelity to Clara, by fancying Mary like her; and he replied, as soon as his laughter allowed him, "Yes, O'Byrne, yes, as much as a black-eyed, dark-haired, slender little girl can be like a blue-eyed, fair-haired, tall and formed woman of three-and-twenty."

"Ah! but they are alike though," said O'Byrne, looking rather foolish; "and I hope I shall see the little one again, and her mother too,—who is very comely also."

Davenant agreed with him in the hopes and the opinion; and then, as he could not yet endure the thoughts of seeing Eleanor, he begged O'Byrne to call at his uncle's on his way home, as he thought he should be expected there, to say for him all that was necessary to quiet the alarm of Clara and Eleanor.

He did so; and having spoken peace to their troubled minds, he prevailed on them to go to bed immediately; but he did not allow

them to go till he had drawn tears from their eyes, and nearly from his own, by a description of the scene at the lodgings of Charles Fielding.

"I will call on dear Ellen O'Donovan this morning," said Clara feelingly; and Eleanor would have been only too happy to have been able to say she would do the same. But conscious shame forbade her to pay the visit; and while Clara, on reaching her chamber, soon fell into a calm refreshing sleep, the pillow of Eleanor remained feverish and sleepless.

Davenant meanwhile returned to his own lodgings perturbed, perplexed, unhappy, and was continually saying to himself, "How can I ever venture to marry a woman on whose word I can have no dependence?"

It was a prospect he could not yet bear to dwell upon; he therefore turned from it to a pleasanter subject of contemplation; namely, a plan for improving the situation of Fielding; and before he went to bed he wrote a note, requesting him to dine with him at a coffee-house the next day.

It was late before he rose; and it was very reluctantly that he dressed to go to dine at his uncle's, as he dreaded his next meeting with Eleanor. But when he went, he found she was too ill to rise; and it was really a relief to his mind, as Clara assured him she was only suffering from uneasiness of mind, and the dread of seeing him, and perhaps of seeing "your altered eye too," added Clara with a faint smile.

"Has she not deserved to meet my altered eye?" said Davenant, who had been previously informed by Clara that Eleanor wished her uncle to remain in ignorance of the whole transaction. "And even now, you see, she enjoins concealment. You must own that this last violation of truth is far worse than the other."

"She feels that herself," replied Clara; "and I do assure you, that if anything can prevent her from a repetition of her errors, the terrors and agony of last night and to-day will, I am convinced, do it."

"*If* anything can cure her! Oh! Miss Delancy, even your candour speaks with an *if!* However, I see that I must wear the chains which I have forged for myself; and I will bear them as well as I can."

In the evening Eleanor was prevailed on to rise; and when she came down, in a most becoming undress, and with every appearance of excessive dejection, Davenant's heart was so softened by her beauty and her tears, that he promised to think no more of a fault which was, he owned, only too common, and which in this instance was occasioned by anxiety for his good opinion.

The next day, however, Eleanor, being once more assured of her prize, though she still "rejoiced in trembling," resumed her usual spirits, and every trace of self-blame and consequent dejection was gone. But Davenant, instead of rejoicing in her recovered smiles, was so mortified at her want of proper feeling, that when he came to his uncle's in the evening, after dining with Fielding, he could not help mentioning his mortification to Clara, when he was alone with her; nor could he help adding when he bade her good night, "Oh! Miss Delancy, why was it my hard fate to find you attached and engaged to Lieutenant Beaumont?"

Clara stood for some minutes motionless on the spot where he left her. "I attached and engaged to Lieutenant Beaumont! Cruel, perfidious girl!" she exclaimed; "this must have been your doing; and *now* I understand the suppressed tenderness of Davenant's manner to me; now I know why, though he preferred me, he was led to address another. But I can undeceive him, and it is not yet too late; and Eleanor deserves no delicacy, no consideration from me." But something whispered her that it *was indeed too late;* and Clara passed another sleepless night.

The next day a feeling of perturbation difficult to be conquered, prevented her from asking Davenant, when he came to a late breakfast, what he meant by his allusion to Lieutenant Beaumont; and soon after breakfast, Davenant and Morley retired to the study of the latter.

Clara, when the gentlemen left her, went into Eleanor's apartment, who was only just risen, and had resumed her *interesting languor* and her *touching depression*, meaning to preserve them all that day at least, and not to appear below stairs; as her quick observation had discovered that Davenant's manner had grown cold whenever she seemed to recover her spirits; and that it was kind only when she seemed depressed.

As Clara was now alone with her, she was going to ask her, what she had said concerning her and Mr. Beaumont, when Morley's under-footman came in, evidently a little in liquor, but only enough to give him courage without disordering his understanding. Having entered the room, he shut the door, and said to Eleanor, "I want you to do me a kindness, Miss. Master has given me warning, because I was not home till you were, that night you were so late at the Opera; for I went out to a frolic, without leave."

"Well, well, name your request," said Eleanor.

"It is that you would tell my master that, as you had given your servant leave to go out, you had taken me to the Opera, and that I was there waiting for you all the time."

"What insolence!" cried Eleanor, blushing deeply at this impudent request. "Do you expect me to tell a lie to your master for your sake?"

"Why not, Miss? I have often told my master lies, and other people too, for yours."

"Leave the room this moment," cried Eleanor; "how dare you speak thus to me?"

"Why, you know it is all true, and that one good turn deserves another," said he, (while Eleanor vainly made signs to him not to speak before Clara,)—"but if I must go, I must; and if you will not tell a white lie to keep me in my place, it is all very well, Miss; and I see there is no gratitude in the world." So saying he left the room, and shutting the door with great violence, ran hastily down stairs; while Eleanor, though she anxiously wished to run after him, dared not go, as she was *acting the invalid*, and had declared herself unable to leave her room.

Clara was now going to demand an explanation of this extraordinary scene, but was prevented by the entrance of Eleanor's mantua-maker, who came to take orders; and as she exhibited patterns of dresses, Eleanor was so pleasantly engaged, that she forgot her anxiety concerning the insolent footman. Poor Eleanor! she lttle thought what was passing in her uncle's study.

While Morley and Davenant were looking over papers, the angry footman entered the room, and said, "he was going away, he found, directly; but as he hoped his master would give him a good character, he came to convince him, by unburthening his conscience, that if ever he did wrong he was penitent for it; and that he must own Miss Musgrave had tempted him more than once to deceive his good master."

"How!" cried both gentlemen at once.

"Yes, 'tis very true. You remember, sir, you and Mr. Davenant saw an officer go out of the door one day, and you asked me who it was, and Miss Musgrave had desired me to say that it was a gentleman to Miss Delancy, whereas as how it was Captain Lethbridge to her."

"Can this be true?" said Davenant to his uncle.

"I really don't know; but—"

"Nay, 'tis all true, and more. That night, sir, that she stayed from the Opera, she expected the captain to call; and she said if he did, I was to call her out, and say it was the mantua-maker who wanted her; and you may remember I did say so; and she went out and stayed some time."

"Yes, yes—so she did—so she did; but I cannot believe your story."

"Nor I," cried Davenant; "my betrothed wife having clandestine meetings with another man! Impossible!"

"Maybe you think she can't write to another man either; but there—as I am now no longer your servant and never was hers—there is a letter to the captain, which I was to put in the post; but as she has refused me a kindness, why should I do her one?—so there it is."

Morley took the letter, speechless with rage and consternation, and instantly broke the seal.

"Hold, sir! what are you doing?" cried Davenant.

"My duty—my duty both to her as a guardian, and to you as an uncle; remember, she is still my ward, and I had forbidden her to encourage Captain Lethbridge's addresses." He then eagerly read the letter, and with every limb trembling with agitation he desired her treacherous agent to leave the room, and let Miss Musgrave be summoned to attend him.

The footman obeyed, and as he left the room Clara entered on some message to her uncle, and beheld with alarm the countenances of both the gentlemen.—"What has happened? What is the matter?" cried she.

"You will soon know," replied her uncle, giving Eleanor's letter to Davenant, who, though he was shocked at the duplicity of the writer, was glad to find his emancipation was now secure.

Eleanor sent word that she was not able to come down stairs, she therefore begged to see the gentlemen and Miss Delancy in her dressing-room; and they obeyed the summons.

"So, madam!" said her uncle, "I have discovered in what manner my ward treats my nephew, her affianced husband. So, madam! I find you receive clandestine visits, and write clandestine letters to a Captain Lethbridge, spite of your solemn engagements to Mr. Davenant."

"Who says—who dares—"

"Nay, nay—beware, Miss Musgrave, nor add more falsehood to treachery, already terrible to me," cried Davenant; while Clara, pale and trembling, supported herself by the chair next her.

"Look, madam!" cried Morley, "the man whom you bribed to tell me lies has turned informer; and I have read this letter from you to Lethbride, in which you tell him, 'that spite of all he hears and sees, your marriage with my nephew is by no means sure; that I, your cruel guardian, persecute you to marry him because I think he will die if you do not, as he is most devotedly attached to you; and that as for five years more you must be entirely in my power, you are afraid your weakness of character may at length lead you to yield to my importunities; but that at present you hold out, as his image reigns triumphant, and you must ever love him best, even though you marry Davenant.' There, madam; there are your handwriting and your signature. I presume you do not pretend to deny them?"

"Hear me, sir—hear me," cried Eleanor, clasping her hands in agony; "it was fear for Mr. Davenant's life that led me to write thus; for Lethbridge has threatened it; and all I wished was, to be married during his absence at quarters, unknown to him; for indeed, indeed, Mr. Davenant, I love you best, and only you."

"You say the same thing," he replied, "to Captain Lethbridge, madam; consequently you must deceive one of us, and can deserve confidence from neither; therefore, though every thing for our marriage is far advanced, this letter justifies me to myself, and to every one, for declaring our engagement null and void, now and for ever."

Eleanor instantly fell into strong hysterics, and was conveyed to her chamber; and Clara, pitying while she blamed her, assisted to convey her to her chamber.

The paroxysm, however, soon subsided; and as Eleanor desired to be left alone, Clara returned into the study. She found Davenant informing her guardian, that he thought it would be only delicate and proper in him to leave London for a short time, under the present circumstances; and both Morley and Clara agreed with him in opinion.

Accordingly he set off for his estate in Surrey that evening; having previously been informed by Clara, that Eleanor had told her she intended to visit an invalid sister in Devonshire, as soon as she was able to undertake the journey.

"In that case, sir," said Davenant to his uncle, "I shall return to town as soon as you inform me that Miss Musgrave is gone."

"Then I shall announce her departure to you," replied Morley, "as soon as it has taken place."

When Clara returned to Eleanor, after she had taken leave of Davenant, she found her in stronger hysterics than she had yet witnessed; but as her quick ear now distinguished in her convulsive sobs, the tone of real anguish, rather than that of mortified feeling and angry disappointment, she felt more compassion for her than she had experienced on her first attack; and wondered what had caused this new agitation, so evidently deriving its source from *the misery of the heart.*

Her wonder was not of long continuance; for Eleanor, unable to speak, put a letter into her hand recently received from Captain Lethbridge; in which he told her, that having discovered that she had deceived him in her assurances that there was nothing as yet fixed between her and Mr. Davenant, for that he *now knew* her wedding-dresses were making, he declared he would never see or speak to her again, but forget, as soon as possible, a woman so treacherous, so false, and so wholly unworthy of the love of a fond and confiding heart.

Clara felt herself moved to excessive pity when she read this letter, and saw the real anguish which it occasioned Eleanor, though she could not but own the retribution was just; since Eleanor, led by ambition and probably by less worthy motives, had prevailed on herself to *woo* and to *accept* the addresses of a man whom she did not love, and give up the man whom she did.

Still Clara was as yet unable to understand why Eleanor had played a double part on this occasion; and why, when she was sure of marrying Davenant, she had not resolutely given up Lethbridge.

When Eleanor was more composed, Clara could not help interrogating her on this subject; and she at length drew from her a confession that, though she was apparently on the eve of marriage with Davenant, she had always a sort of conviction on her mind that something would happen to prevent the union from taken place. But she could not prevail on herself to give Clara a reason for this apprehension. She could not bear to own to her, that it proceeded from a conviction of Davenant's having conquered his repugnance to her character, merely by the force of grateful pity for her supposed attachment to himself—an attachment which he was taught to believe pernicious to her health and her peace; and as she was conscious that before the wedding-day arrived many more proofs of her disingenuousness and disregard to truth might come out, sufficient to justify Davenant, to his own mind at least, in breaking off the connexion, she thought it better not to give up entirely the man whom her heart preferred, till she was certain of obtaining him who was the choice of her ambition.

But now both were lost to her; though she still flattered herself she should be able to convince Lethbridge she had broken with Davenant for his sake; and in the meanwhile she resolved to conceal her mortification and uneasiness in a distant county, and there concert means to bring about a reconciliation with Lethbridge. But as she wished to give her own colouring to the rupture with Davenant, she refused to accept Clara's offer to attend her to her sister's—since she feared her observant eye, and undeviating sincerity. Nor was it long before she set off for Devonshire, leaving Clara so full of hope and happiness, that she seemed to have changed characters with Eleanor, and to wonder that she could ever think life, as she had lately done, a burthen which she should at any time be glad to lay down.

"Surely," said Clara to herself, "I shall now have no difficulty in telling Mr. Davenant I am not engaged to any one; and then—" But the next moment she recollected, that if she had such difficulty in prevailing on herself to say this to him when he was an engaged man, how much more difficult would it be for her to say it now he was disengaged! Still this recollection had not power to depress her spirits,—"for was not Davenant freed from a woman unworthy of him? and was not that enough to exhilarate the woman who tenderly loved him?"

In the meanwhile Clara was impatient for Davenant's return; but he arrived even sooner

than she could have expected, after the receipt of his uncle's letter.

Clara, not knowing he was returned, came singing down stairs, and with a light step bounded into her guardian's study, whom she had left alone.

On seeing Davenant, her usual reserve of manner returned; and her buoyant spirits were lost, in the consciousness that tell-tale blushes were now mantling on her cheek;—and while Davenant, pleased and flattered at her confusion, came forward to meet her, blushing almost as deeply as herself, Morley began to believe that after all he was wrong concerning the poor lieutenant.

"Sidney," said he, "I cannot think what is come to that girl. She is now more riotous, I think, than ever poor Eleanor was—there she goes, singing about the house—she comes down stairs two steps at a time, and seems to have forgotten that there is such a thing as walking in a sober steady pace. I have heard you admire Clara's pensive graces, Sidney; if so, I am afraid you will miss your old favourites very much; for they are certainly gone."

"I am inclined to think," replied Davenant, "that I shall always admire Miss Delancy's present graces so much, that I shall not be conscious I ever admired any other."

"Very gallant indeed! But come, Sidney, you must own that it is very unfeeling and very unsentimental in Clara, to be in such high spirits so soon after her friend Eleanor's departure, and under such circumstances too. Answer, Clara, and defend yourself if you can."

"That I can very easily," she replied, with a degree of blushing archness which became her much. "True, Eleanor is my friend; but then I have another friend, full as old a friend as Eleanor, and certainly as estimable; and while I deplore Eleanor's disappointment, I am abundantly consoled by the consciousness of—of—"

"Of what?" cried Davenant.

"Of his deliverance."

"Deliverance indeed I think it," said Morley; "but surely, Clara, *you* once thought it a very suitable match."

"Never, sir; never."

"Never! You amaze me. I thought you said,—that is, you thought, my dear, that——" here Morley began to recollect that he had assured Davenant Clara had said what she never uttered, in order to influence his nephew; and he became so confused, that he was glad to make an excuse to leave the room; and Davenant was left alone with Clara.

"You surprise me—you agreeably surprise me," said Davenant; "for my uncle assured me you were desirous that I should be the husband of your friend."

"Is it possible?"

"It is most true;" and he repeated with great accuracy all that Morley had ever said on the subject.

Clara was at first speechless with vexation and surprise; but she soon convinced Davenant that she had not said any thing on which Morley could in truth have grounded what he asserted; except that she had owned she thought the behaviour of Davenant and Eleanor in the coach resembled that of lovers; "and you know," she added, smiling, but blushing, "that I was very correct in that assertion."

Nor could the conscious Davenant deny the fact.

"Alas!" observed Clara, "this was some of my guardian's *white lying*, in which he sees *no harm*. Yet for what purpose did he say this? Still he could not have said it without design."

And both Davenant and Clara fell into silent consideration of what his motives could be.

At this moment company was announced in the drawing-room; and Davenant took leave to return no more till the next day, as he was engaged to dine out. But he was in no frame of mind to be an agreeable companion at any party, as hope once more had possession of his heart, and he wanted to indulge in the pleasing reveries into which it threw him; for, if his uncle was capable of deceiving him voluntarily in *one* instance, he might in another; and Clara might be free both heart and hand. But then the sword and other things recurred to him; still hope predominated, and he resolved to have an explanation with Clara the next day.

Accordingly he came to his uncle's, prepared to ask herself whether she was an engaged woman or not; but he sought her in vain in the front drawing-room, where she usually sat; and laying his hat down, he went into his uncle's study.

He too was absent; he therefore returned into the front drawing-room, in which, just as he entered, he saw Clara in tears, leaning on the shoulder of a young man in a military great-coat, while he, kissing her cheek, as he pressed her to his bosom, uttered an earnest "God bless you!" and rushing past Davenant disappeared in a moment.

Davenant for an instant stood riveted to the spot in painful emotion. The question he came to ask was, he feared, answered already, and that he had just beheld the envied Beaumont.

The thought was insupportable, and he too ran down stairs, and out of the house; but he had not gone far when he recollected that he had no hat on, and that he had left it on the drawing-room table. He was therefore forced to go back; and when he re-entered the rooms he found Clara leaning with her head on her hands, in such evident agitation that pity and alarm became his predominant feelings, and

he sat down by her, resolved to discover the cause of her distress and to do all in his power to relieve it. He began by asking her if the gentleman who had just left her was not Mr. Beaumont. She replied in the affirmative. He then asked if he was going to the West Indies with his regiment. She replied that he was; and then with a beating heart prepared herself for the next question which she expected Davenant was about to ask.

"Miss Delancy," said Davenant, "what I have witnessed this morning determines me to leave London to-morrow, on a tour through England; but before I go, I wish to prove how dear, how very dear to me is the happiness of *Mrs. Delancy's daughter.*"

Here he rose, and traversed the room in great agitation; but reseating himself, he said —"there was a time,—for why should I be ashamed to own it?—when I hoped to transfer the affection which I once felt for the mother to the equally idolized daughter; but scarcely had I seen you, and found how capable you were of realizing my high-raised hopes of happiness, when I was told you were attached, if not engaged, to a Lieutenant Beaumont?"

"Who told you so?" said Clara, interrupting him.

"My uncle; and Eleanor by hints, or rather more than hints, confirmed his assertion."

"I suspected as much," observed Clara.

And Davenant continued;—"What they said was confirmed also by circumstances, and what I have seen this morning, puts the question beyond a doubt; and all the faint hope with which I entered the house, is banished for ever. Now then, ever dear Clara, listen to the voice of a friend—and let me prove myself one." [Here he paused in strong emotion; and Clara, too happy and too agitated to speak, covered her face with her handkerchief.]

"Clara," continued Davenant, recovering his voice, "you, as yet, have no power over your fortune; but I have money and interest, and I offer you both, to get your lover exchanged into a regiment which is not likely to be sent into a dangerous climate like that of the West Indies, and then I will lend him money to purchase promotion. Sweet indeed it would have been to me to try to promote your happiness myself; but as that is impossible, I will console myself by endeavouring to promote it with another. Speak, Miss Delancy—tell me you pity me, and will console me by accepting my offer."

Clara now took her handkerchief from her face, and smiling through her tears, said, while she placed her hand on his—"I do accept your offer, for and in the name of Lieutenant Beaumont; and it has relieved my mind from fears concerning him, which have pressed heavily upon it. But let me beseech you never to *reveal* what he is *to me.*"

"Never, if you desire me not."

"I do. Then know that Lieutenant Beaumont is—"

"What?" said Davenant, almost gasping for breath.

"'*My father's son, and my brother!*'"—"Thank heaven," cried Davenant, bursting into tears, the result of mingled and overwhelming feelings, amongst which joy was predominant. And Clara, though with a faltering voice, continued thus;—"The secret of the relationship was disclosed to me by my mother, who heard it from my father in the earliest days of their courtship; but it was told by him to her alone, and by her to me only, that I might continue to Mr. Beaumont, after her death, the friendship which she had ever shown him. Impatiently, therefore, have I awaited the time of my coming of age, that I might be able to assist him in the line of his profession. But being, like my mother, unwilling to expose my father to blame of any kind, I too have kept our relationship secret; so has Beaumont; to you, however, I have made no scruple of revealing it, because I know it is safe, and—"

"And why," said Davenant, eagerly approaching her, and taking her unreluctant hand; "speak on, dearest Clara, and tell me why you have confided to me a secret withheld from every one else?"

"Because," replied Clara, in a faint voice, "it may, perhaps, some time or other, be my duty, as well as pleasure, to have no reserve from you."

And Davenant, understanding how much these words implied, was not slow to take advantage of them.

Explanations between lovers are very satisfactory to the parties concerned, but very foolish things to describe;—so I will not attempt it. Suffice, that Clara was as ingenuous as Davenant had been, and owned to him that his attachment had not preceded her's; and Mr. Morley returned from his morning business, to find to his surprise, those whom he had left friends become engaged lovers,—though delicacy and propriety forbade them to think of declaring their engagement for even months to come.

But while Morley congratulated his nephew and his ward on the prospect of a union which he owned was a well-assorted one, he was struck by the coldness, almost amounting to severity, with which both Clara and Davenant addressed him. But as they were too ingenuous to conceal the cause of their displeasure, it was not long before both Davenant and Clara told him that his inaccuracy of representation, not to call it by a harsher name, was such, and had nearly been so pernicious in its consequences, that it called for the most severe reprehension on their part; and they hoped that he, like Eleanor, would take warning by experience, and learn that even *white lies* may be in their result as destructive of the happiness

of others as those which are denominated the wicked and the malignant. In short, that he would lay it down as a rule of conduct, that no actions are certain to be right, safe, and respectable, of which truth is not the impeller and the guide.

"Upon my word, young people," replied Morley, trying to laugh, but more inclined to cry, "you are very conceited, and very presumptuous, in thus laying down the law to me, and taking me to task as if I were a child, and you were greybeards. But perhaps you are right; still, how could I foresee that Eleanor would turn out such a naughty girl?"

"No; but still you knew I was always inclined to love Clara best; and think what misery your misrepresentation had nearly fixed on me for life!"

"And on me too," cried Clara unguardedly, but with great feeling.

"On you too!" cried Morley, archly; "Would Sidney's marrying Eleanor have made you miserable?"

"At least," replied Clara, "it would have doomed me to a single life; for I believe I never should have loved another man."

"Say no more, girl," said Morley, with much emotion, while Davenant fondly pressed her hand to his heart; "I shudder to think that I have been so near making two such excellent beings wretched. And now I feel that the best amends I can make you at this moment is leaving you together—but what is to become of the poor lieutenant?"

"He remains to me the friend he always was, and no more," replied Clara; "for I assure you he is engaged, though not to me; and Davenant will try to promote him."

Morley then asked no more questions, but left the lovers alone.

Davenant now informed Clara, that he had been so fortunate as to procure Fielding a higher appointment, and, consequently, a greater salary, in the office in which he now was; and that there was no doubt but that he would in time be promoted still further.

I will add here, that Mrs. O'Donovan was, a few months after, married to the man who had been the first choice of her young heart, and who was now able to maintain her in affluence, and to be a father to her children; that Colonel O'Byrne had not much difficulty in transferring his affections from Clara Delancy to Mary O'Donovan, whom he still persisted to think a striking likeness of the former; and that Mary, with her mother and uncle's entire and delighted approbation, bestowed her hand, as well as her heart, on the warm-hearted Irishman.

Eleanor meanwhile had no opportunity of attempting to regain the affection of Captain Lethbridge, as he married another woman two months after he broke off his acquaintance with her; not being recalled to his allegiance to her by the news of her rupture with Davenant.

But whether she felt the loss of him or not is very problematical; as, not long after the marriage of Davenant and Clara took place, she accepted the addresses of a nobleman many years older than herself, whom she met at Sidmouth.

A different result has attended the marriages of Clara and of Eleanor, as might well be expected from the difference of their characters.

Eleanor's husband is naturally enough jealous of his young and beautiful wife, who, by her habitual disregard of truth, has wholly annihilated his confidence in her word, and therefore exposes herself often to the suspicion of errors which she is incapable of, by the constant detection of that guilt to which she is continually *prone*. If she goes out alone, her husband, on her return, does not believe that she has only been to such a place, and seen only certain persons; and if he accompanies her abroad, he fancies he sees signs of secret intelligence in her manner, and that her eyes, when turned from him, are employed in conveying signals of invitation to approach, or hints to *forbear* approaching her; while her life is passed in a series of domestic bickerings *at home*, and endless preparations for them *abroad*.

Not such is the life of Clara and Davenant. Mutual confidence, the result of mutual esteem, founded on a knowledge of each other's unsullied integrity, makes their hours glide away in uninterrupted happiness; while their children (early taught that a love and practice of truth are the only sure foundation of that moral character, which, by exciting confidence, leads not only to peace of mind, but to the esteem and respect of our friends and fellow-creatures,) are likely to grow daily in virtue under the watchful eyes of their affectionate parents; und to reward those parents for the PRECEPTS which they TEACH, and the EXAMPLE which they GIVE.

HENRY WOODVILLE.

THERE never was a happier family than that of Mr. Woodville, nor one whose happiness seemed more likely to last. He was a prosperous manufacturer in a large city; his eldest son was clerk to a general merchant in London, and was sure, when he was old enough, of having a share in the firm; for the head partner of the firm had no children, and it was thought likely that Henry Woodville would be his heir. Elizabeth Woodville, too, the eldest daughter, was going to be remarkably well married in every point of view, and her success in life exhibited the triumph of character and female attraction over pride and prejudice; for her lover was rich and

highly connected, and his father had forbidden him to think of making a woman his wife who had neither high birth nor fortune; but chance having thrown Elizabeth in Mr. Harcourt's way, (where he did not know her nor she him, and under circumstances which called forth from her some of those little services that women alone can render,) he was so charmed with her person, manner, and qualities, that, as soon as he knew who she was, he retracted his prohibition to the union, and even bestowed on it the warmest approbation; and, as soon as his son was five-and-twenty, it was settled that they were to marry.

Henry Woodville was now looking forward with great impatience to the hour when he should be taken into the firm; for he had lately fallen in love, though the object of his passion was not only wholly unconscious of it, but had never even looked at him to the best of his belief.

She had three or four times accompanied her mother to Mr. Courtnay's, when she came to speak to him on business relative to the disposal of a large stock of wine, left by her deceased husband, and had been too modest to look at any one; therefore, Woodville was sure her eyes had never met his; but still *he* had looked and loved; and though her mother's situation was such as to forbid his raising his hopes to the possession of her daughter while he was a clerk, he knew that, when in business for himself, she would have no right to look down on him. Accordingly, he chose to *feed* rather than starve his passion, and he always contrived to meet them in the Mall in St. James's park on a Sunday evening, where, habited in his best array, with his *couteau de chasse* by his side, (that being the dress costume in the reign during which the circumstances that I have to relate happened,) he hoped to attract the eyes of Anna Vincent, and lead her to read in his, the wishes of his heart. But he tried in vain: and once, when he had an opportunity of doing her a service, and perhaps of catching her eye, the timidity of true love prevented him from taking advantage of the opportunity; for his less interested companion took up the glove she dropped, and on presenting it to her, received that look and those smiling thanks which to him would have been invaluable.

He consoled himself, however, by the thought, that when he was a partner in the concern, he would get his kind friend, Mr. Courtnay, to introduce him, and then perhaps she would look at him.

But a most sad and unexpected blow was now put to his expectations, and the prosperity of his family.

Circumstances, over which he had no control, and which no industry and no care could have prevented, brought on the ruin of Mr. Woodville. However, such was the universal conviction of his probity, and such the general opinion of his worth, that his certificate was instantly signed, and he enabled by his friends to go on with his business again. But though his creditors cheerfully took fifteen shillings in the pound in full of all demands, Mr. Woodville knew he should not rest, till he had paid the full amount of his debt, with interest; and as his trade became very prosperous, and he lived in the most frugal manner, in order to effect his purpose the sooner, he had every prospect of gratifying his laudable ambition. During this time he had also the satisfaction of finding that his unmerited misfortunes had had no effect on Mr. Harcourt; but that the good man had said, "This is a misfortune that is unaccompanied with disgrace, and which has only served to prove the high esteem in which Mr. Woodville is held, and to call forth in him the exhibition of new virtues."

Mr. Woodvile might have had another gratification, but it was concealed from him. Mr. Courtnay had now taken Henry Woodville into the trade; he therefore resolved to shorten the duration of his parent's privations and frugal mode of living, by laying by half of his annual income, in order to facilitate the full payment of his father's debts; and, while this remained undone, he forbade himself to think of marrying, though he could not help loving the unconscious object of his passion, whose mother, having sustained some reduction of income, was gone from London with her daughter, in order to live cheap; but the place of her residence was not yet known to Mr. Courtnay.

Things went on in this manner for three years; and, at the end of that time, Henry remitted his savings to his father, who at first refused to accept them; but, on finding that they would liquidate the debt to all but a hundred pounds, he resolved to reward his son's filial piety by accepting them, as he preferred being his debtor, to being that of any other man or men; and he wrote Henry, by return of post, such a letter as well repaid him for any sacrifice that he had made. Elizabeth's lover had great pleasure in making this trait in Henry's character known to his father, and he owned that he should be proud to be allied to so virtuous a family.

"Now then," thought Henry, "my income is nearly my own; the remaining hundred pounds will soon be gained by my father and me, and then I may think of marrying; and though Mrs. Vincent has left London, no doubt Mr. Courtnay will be able to find out her residence."

It was now the race time at Reading; (in Berkshire;) and Henry, who had hitherto rarely left business, and had, on principle, avoided all unnecessary expense, resolved, as he had never seen a race, to go to this; he also promised himself much pleasure from attending the race-ball, especially as he thought

it was not impossible that chance might lead him to see his beloved there. Accordingly, with the approbation of his partner, he set off for the races.

There is, there can be no pleasure so great as that which has been earned by self-denial, and the surrender of one's own gratification for the sake of duty; and when Henry Woodville set off on his first pursuit of amusement, he experienced such a delightful flow of spirits, and such a feeling of joyous expectation as he had never known before, and which made the pleasant road along which he passed to the pretty town of Reading appear to him a sort of "opening paradise."

When he reached Reading, he found that the races were to begin the next day; and having discovered which was the most fashionable promenade, he repaired to it, in hopes of seeing the lady of his affections amongst the company. But he looked in vain; though love and fancy often clothed a coming object in her form, making the delusion sometimes so strong, that his heart throbbed violently with anticipated pleasure and emotion, till a nearer approach convinced him of his mistake. However, the evening was fine, the walk pleasant, the women handsome, and he was amused; since the sunshine from within met and increased the sunshine without, and there was also hope for the morrow!

The morrow came, and Henry repaired to the race-ground. He surveyed the carriages with a scrutinizing eye;—but she was not there. He went on the stand, but he beheld her not,—and he was disappointed; yet what reason had he to be disappointed? He had had no reason to suppose she was likely to be there, and he could not help owning to himself, no one but a brain-sick lover could have exalted a possibility only into a probability; till at last he could not help laughing at his own folly. But, better still—when the race began, he also *forgot* it.

The sight was beautiful, and the anxiety of interested spectators catching. Henry soon had a favourite horse himself. First he learned to be interested for "blue," another time for "purple;" till at last he found himself betting with strangers, and new hopes, fears, and feelings awakening in his breast; while in the stimulating pleasure of a race, he lost all sense of the probable cruelty attending the training, and the forced exertions of the animals before him.

Nor did the enjoyment cease to blind him while it lasted; and when on his return to the ordinary he dined with some of the joyous company from the ground, he could remember nought but that he was pleased, and that he looked forward to the next day's course with pleasure.

If his companions (who were all strangers to him) were not intellectual, they were harmless; they, like himself, had only betted small sums. And the evening at the ball, though not delightful, (as Henry did not see his love there, whom in spite of his reason he still tried to discover,) had some charm for his unpractised eyes, and he went to rest eagerly anticipating the next day.

It came, and brought with it a trial to Henry; for a young man appeared at the inn and on the course, who had been fellow-clerk with him at Mr. Courtnay's, and who had expected to have been taken into the firm before he was. But such had been his dissipated habits, his love of pleasure, and utter neglect of his duties, that when his father waited on Mr. Courtnay to propose the terms of his entering into business with him, the latter peremptorily refused to have any connexion with one who was wholly incapable of improving, or even of keeping up the interests of any trade, and very capable of decreasing and embarrassing it.

Neither the father nor the son ever forgave this just punishment of the vices of the latter; and when Henry Woodville, on the strength of his excellent conduct, was admitted into that firm whence David Bradford had been rejected, the latter as well as his father became the determined enemies of that more successful, because more deserving youth; and so apt did Bradford always seem to quarrel with Henry, that, in compliance with Mr. Courtnay's warning voice, and his own principles, he made it a rule to avoid being long together where Bradford was. Therefore when he saw him on the race-ground, and found him determined to be near him, to provoke him to bet, and to enter into conversation with him—while his countenance expressed animosity, though he spoke in a tone of kindness; and when he reflected on the irritations of nerve and feeling which such a scene was likely to induce, he wisely resolved to avoid the danger, which if he met he could not perhaps be proof against; and before the last heat was begun, he not only left the race-ground, but the place itself, and mounting his horse, went on to Abingdon, where the assizes were expected to begin in a day or two.

Though alone, Henry Woodville had not the feeling of being solitary; for he loved reading, and was ever fond of communing with his own thoughts—as those who have vigorous and well-filled minds always are;—therefore, though disappointed of the companion who was to have accompanied him on this excursion, he had resolved not to give it up; and now that he had undertaken it, he still felt cheerful and satisfied, though he found himself alone in a crowd in the streets, and at the principal inn of the busy town of Abingdon; and he beguiled the two evenings which were to elapse before the assizes began, in reading, and in writing to Mr. Courtnay and to his own family.

At length the judges entered the town, with

a degree of state and solemnity worthy of the high and *awful* office (I may call it) which they had to fulfil; and Henry, while the trumpets and the bells announced their approach and their arrival, could not help thinking, with a sad sickness of the heart, on those to whom those sounds, instead of opening a prospect of revelry and amusement, awakened the shudderings of alarm, the anticipations of agonizing suspense, and the fear of judgment and of death.

"I shall have no heart," thought he, "for the public amusements of the week; but I shall be deeply interested in attending the courts of justice." And he was so much interested, that on the first day of the assizes he was in court till the judges adjourned; and having returned thither when they did, he remained there till the business ended for the night. But a most painful surprise awaited him on his return to his inn. The landlord met him on his entrance, and told him, that as his house was otherwise quite full, he had taken the liberty of putting a gentleman (a new-comer) into the room through his; which, as it was no thoroughfare, had only a small press-bed in it, and was never used but at such crowded times as the present.

Henry did not, could not, like such an arrangement as this, — to have his chamber the only passage to the room of another, and that other a stranger to him; but as he knew the other inn in the town was full, as he had vainly tried for a bed there, he had no resource but to submit.

"Well," replied he, "I am sorry that it is so—is the gentleman in the public room?"

"Oh no, sir; he is gone to bed; he was very tired, and he drank a good deal of our ale, sir. So he could not sit up till you came, which he was very sorry for, as he knows you quite well."

"Knows me!" cried Henry, starting.

"Yes, sir; and he said you could have no objection to sleep near him. It was not the first time, for you were once fellow-clerks together."

Henry listened to this disclosure with the most painful uneasiness. Here was a man, whom he wished from the best possible motives to avoid, become, as it were, the companion of his chamber! Nor could he now dare to leave the house without giving Bradford a marked and personal offence.

"Well," thought he, "I must make up my mind to the circumstance, trying as it is; and keep steadily before me, come what may, the necessary rule for conduct of 'Bear and forbear.'"

He then with a heavy heart repaired to his chamber, the silence of which was now broken by the loud and restless slumber of Bradford, easily heard through the thin partition between the chambers, especially as the door that led to Bradford's bed-room did not shut close.

However, at last Henry closed his eyes, and slept till six; then he rose, dressed, had breakfasted, and had taken a seat in the court before Bradford awoke.

Henry congratulated himself on having done this. But he had done wrong; as Bradford considered that he had acted thus purposely to avoid the necessity of breakfasting and associating with him; and Henry's enjoyment of the new pleasure before him, that of hearing causes, would have been wholly destroyed, had he known the deep displeasure which his early departure from the inn had excited in the vindictive Bradford.

When the court broke up, Henry returned to the inn to supper, and joined the company at the public table. It was not large, as many of those whom he had seen the night before were gone to the ball; but to the few remaining, Bradford was now added.

"Sir," said Bradford, when Henry had seated himself, "I think you might have had the civility to tell me you were coming hither to the assizes, and then we might have come together. But I suppose, now you are the partner of the rich Mr. Courtnay, and hope to be his heir, you are too proud to associate with your old friends?"

"I should be sorry," Henry mildly replied, "to neglect any one; and I am much concerned to find you thought disrespectful, an omission which could not be intended as such. Do me the favour now, therefore, in token that you forgive me, to drink a glass of wine with me."

Bradford was at first reluctant to comply; but as he saw that the persons present, who seemed to be gentlemen, regarded him as if they thought he ought to accept Henry's offer, he filled his glass, — and for the present, all seemed right between them.

The day had been very hot, and the court had been crowded to suffocation: Henry, therefore, was led from excessive thirst, and the persuasions of others, to drink more than he was accustomed to; and in the deceitful form of cup and negus, he was at length conscious that he had taken more wine than he could bear.

Bradford, in the meantime, whom disappointment and conscious self-degradation had led to habits of intoxication, began to grow very loud and positive in discourse, and evidently more and more disposed to quarrel with Henry; whose temper, fine as it was, grew every moment less able, from the unusual excitement of wine, to endure the coarse allusions of Bradford to "certain plausible hypocritical boys, who, by their seeming sanctity, get on the weak side of shallow men, and deprive honest unsuspecting young fellows of their bread and their rights."

The company could not understand these allusions, but Henry did, only too well, and had wisely resolved to leave the room as soon

as he could; when Bradford called the general attention to a bag of gold and silver which he produced, the greatest part of which he had won at the races, and emptied it on the table. Amongst the money he had put some curious foreign coins. But as the waiters were going to remove the cloth, Bradford was forced to replace all his treasure in the bag, and he did so before Henry had sufficiently examined the beauty of one of the coins.

Accordingly, when the cloth was taken away, and the waiters were setting the wine on the table, he begged Bradford to lend him the bag for a moment. He did so, saying at the same time, "Be sure you return them all; for I have told both the money and the coins, and know how many there are."

Henry did not condescend to notice this coarse insinuation otherwise than by treating it as meant for a joke; and having selected the coin he wanted, he looked at it, and replacing it, returned the bag to the owner.

On which Bradford turned all the contents out on the table again; after telling over the money and coins with a look of malignant suspicion, he declared that he missed a five-guinea piece; and he desired Henry to return it instantly, or he must submit to be searched.

"You cannot possibly mean what you say!" cried Henry, turning very pale; "you can't really think me capable of such an action as this, in earnest! and you know I am no joker; but if I were, you must know that you are the last man I should joke with."

"None of your plausible words to me, sir," replied Bradford;—"I do not see why you should not have taken the money. A bankrupt father may as well make a fraudulent son as a kept-miss daughter; and everybody knows that your father was a bankrupt not long ago, and that your sister is the mistress of young Harcourt."

This was more than Henry could endure, and exclaiming, "Villain! you are a liar and a slanderer!" he aimed a blow at Bradford, who instantly drew his sword. Henry did the same; and bloodshed must have ensued on the instant, had not the bystanders held the enraged combatants back; and as the waiters called in the landlord, who insisted that no such proceedings should go forward in his house, peace was for a while restored. But as Henry persisted to demand an apology, and that Bradford should retract what he had said concerning his innocent sister, and as he persisted in repeating the calumny, declaring that he would tell every one Henry had robbed him, the gentlemen present were obliged, according to the laws of worldly honour, to own that a duel between the parties was unavoidable; as the bitter resentment which Henry now expressed against Bradford was not only justifiable, but that the injury was one which, if not otherwise atoned for, could be wiped away only by the blood of the offender.

It was therefore agreed that they should meet the next day; but not early; because, though one of the gentlemen was willing to be second to Henry, every one of the others, on various pretences, declined being second to Bradford; and he found that he should be obliged to go a few miles off to engage the attendance of a friend and relation and bottle companion of his.

Bradford now continued to drink so largely that he was soon carried dead-drunk to bed; and Henry's repugnance to sleep in the same chamber with him, from fear lest he should renew the quarrel when they were alone, was therefore removed; as he was sure that Bradford would sleep till long after he was risen.

Therefore, as soon as the attendants had undressed and put their senseless charge to bed, he retired to rest; but not before he had been persuaded to drink another copious draught of powerful ale.

From the combined causes of heat, fatigue, agitation, and the unusual quantity of wine and ale which he had drunk, Henry fell into the deepest and soundest sleep possible, even as soon as he laid his head on the pillow, and the habitual, but now heartless, prayer died away unfinished on his lips.

Alas! it was the conviction how sound *would* be his sleep, which emboldened the robber to enter the chamber in the dead of night, and to commit the crime of murder at the suggestions of avarice.

One of the waiters, whose name was Everett, was a man who had once belonged to a gang of housebreakers and thieves, but struck with temporary remorse during a violent illness, had left his wicked courses; and after trying different employments, had been so fortunate as to get the place of waiter at an inn; and there he might perhaps have become a more respectable character, had he not formed a connexion with a very abandoned woman, whom he married; and who now, on pretence of her being very ill, and wanting his assistance, had insisted on his leaving his place and coming to her, with a view to his joining a gang of smugglers, with whom she was intimate, and going with them immediately on a cruise on board their cutter, which she thought would be good for her health.

Accordingly, he had given warning to his master, and was to set off the next day for the place where his wife expected him. But well knowing that he should be more welcome to her if he brought money with him, and also being aware that he could get on board ship immediately, he resolved to make prize of part, if not all, of that gold which Bradford had so ostentatiously displayed; and he thought he could do this with more security, because Bradford having already accused Henry of having robbed him, his suspicions would undoubtedly fall on *him;* and he could, if Henry was sound asleep, (as he expected him to be,)

put some of the money and coins in Henry's pocket.

Accordingly he entered the room, and found Henry unconscious as if in the sleep of death. On Henry's table lay a small diamond pin, the gift of his mother; that, Everett resolved to make his own; and for a while pinned it on the bosom of his shirt. He then went to Bradford's bedside; but finding him less soundly asleep than he expected, and also finding that his head lay on his pockets, he saw no certainty of securing his prize, but by adding murder to robbery. He therefore drew *Henry's sword* from his scabbard, and made a blow with it at the yet sleeping Bradford. But though it wounded, it did not kill, and it awoke him immediately so much as to enable him to struggle with the villain for one moment; but in vain; the next stroke was fatal; and Bradford fell back on his pillow, a bleeding and insensible corpse. Everett then went back into Henry's room, and replaced the bloody sword in the scabbard.

At this moment, just as Everett had completed his purpose, and was returning to take possession of the money, Henry became restless and talked in his sleep; which alarmed Everett so much that he dared not stay a moment longer in either room, but returned to his own; where, having washed himself and burnt to ashes all his linen that was bloody, he resolved to wait till he thought Henry was once more sound asleep. But on his re-entering the chamber, Henry, to his great alarm, cried out, "Who's there?" and he was glad to retreat; nor could he find an opportunity of ever entering the room again; for he heard Henry walking about soon after, and found by the noise he made, that he was dressing himself.

Thus, then, had he burthened his soul with the commission of murder without any recompense whatever. Nor dared he leave the house under such circumstances, as that would appear a suspicious proceeding; and with a sinking heart, though with an assured countenance, Everett dressed himself, and joined his fellow-servants.

When Henry awoke from his first deep sleep, he awoke to sleep no more that night; for with returning consciousness came the horrible recollection of the engagement he had made, to do an act which his own principles, both moral and religious, utterly condemned; namely, at the risk of his own life and that of his parent's peace, raise his arm against the existence of a fellow-creature!

To a virtuous young man and an obedient and pious child like Henry, such a recollection was insupportable; and it was not long before he began to consider whether it was or was not too late to draw back from the precipice on which he stood.

Nor did he deliberate in vain; for soon not only "consideration like an angel came, and whipped the offending spirit out of him," but salutary fear of God conquered the unworthy fear of man and of man's censure; and he almost positively resolved to quit Berkshire instantly, and to leave a letter for Bradford and for his own second, explaining his reasons for not fighting; and declaring his resolution, if Bradford persisted in his calumnies and his violence, to seek redress in a court of law.

Still he could not prevail on himself to do what his conscience required. Still pride, and even a virtuous resentment, withheld their approbation of the meditated step; and he was sitting irresolute still, (though his trunk was nearly packed, and he himself dressed, all but his sword,) when the door opened, and a waiter appeared at it.

"What do you want?" said Henry.

"I am come to awake Mr. Bradford, sir, by his own desire, at five o'clock."

"Is it so late?" replied Henry. "But be so good as not to awake Mr. Bradford yet," he added, in great agitation; "I have a reason for it."

"Indeed I must, sir," replied the man, with a look of suspicion; "for he is a violent gentleman, and he would be angry."

"No matter; oblige me, and here is money for you," said Henry, who feared to have any communication with Bradford till his mind was made up how to act.

"I will have none of your money, sir," returned the man indignantly; for at this moment, glancing his eye towards the sword which lay on Henry's chair, he saw the hilt was bloody, and that there was blood on the floor by it.

As soon, therefore, as he had uttered these words, he ran past the astonished Henry, and entered Bradford's chamber. At the sight of the scene before him, the man uttered an exclamation of horror, which made Henry follow him. But as he intercepted Henry's view of the corpse, he exclaimed, "What is the matter?"

On hearing his voice, the waiter turned round—"Do *you* ask what is the matter?" said he; "Wretch! hypocrite!" So saying, he ran to the door of Henry's room, in spite of his detaining arm, took the key which was inside; and then locking Henry in, went down stairs crying "Murder."

Amazement, speechless amazement, now took possession of Henry; which was succeeded by horror and agony as great, when on looking towards the bed, on returning into the room from his vain pursuit of the waiter, he beheld Bradford stiff and bleeding, and saw by his countenance that he was dead, either by his own hand or that of an assassin.

Surprise, pity, and consternation, at once assailed and overwhelmed him; and he staggered against the wall, nearly as insensible as the bloody corpse before him; while at first no fear or consideration for himself mingled with his

feelings for Bradford. But short was the disinterested agony. The waiter's singular manner, both of speaking and acting, in one alarming moment recurred to his mind, and convinced him that the suspicion of having murdered the wretched Bradford must indubitably fall on *him*. And he stood pale and motionless, the image of despair, with his eyes wildly fixed on the unconscious object before him, when he heard the door unlocked, and saw every inhabitant of the inn rushing into the apartment in disorder and alarm.

The scene needed no explanation — it explained itself. On the bed in the inner room, lay the bleeding and now cold body of Bradford; by the side of it stood Henry, overwhelmed with such agony as could be easily mistaken for the agony of guilt; while the landlord seized the sword of Henry Woodville, and drawing it from the scabbard, held it up to view, stained to the very hilt with blood.

"*My* sword!" cried Henry, roused by this painful sight; "and was it done with *my* sword too? Then I am a lost man indeed!" And leaning against the wall, he hid his face with his hands.

It was found also that Bradford had *not been robbed!* And one of the gentlemen with whom he and Bradford had supped, now stooped down and took up something which glittered on the floor, and it proved to be Henry's shirt-pin, the beauty of which he had admired the preceding night. The head of this pin had been broken off in Bradford's short struggle with Everett; who, as I before stated, had pinned it on his shirt; and it now served (with the circumstance of there being no robbery) as an additional proof against the innocent Henry.

"Alas!" cried the gentleman, holding it up to Henry, who had now uncovered his face; "Unhappy young man, look! what an evidence is this against you!"

Henry did look — recognised this once dear ornament, (the gift of his mother on his birthday), and turning away, he groaned aloud, but said nothing then. But when the coroner was come, and the inquest entered upon, he solemnly called upon his Maker to witness his entire innocence of the murder, strong as he must own appearances to be against him.

These terrible events had succeeded each other with such excessive rapidity, that Henry felt too much bewildered, and his feelings were too much obtunded, for him to take in as yet the danger, the misery, and the necessities of his situation. But when, in consequence of the strong circumstantial evidence against him, he was committed to prison as the supposed murderer of Bradford, he was roused to the full horrors of his almost hopeless condition; but then he recollected with some comfort, that his friend and partner was only a day's journey from him; and he was sure that he would not only hasten to him immediately, but would break the sad tidings to his beloved family.

Accordingly he begged to be allowed to write to him; and having done so, stating his entire innocence, and his confidence that Mr. Courtnay would *believe* him innocent, he felt more easy, and resigned himself with confidence to the will and protection of that Being who "judgeth not as man judgeth."

I will not attempt to describe the feelings of Henry when the night closed in on him in the cell of his prison, and he saw himself chained, confined, and abhorred as a murderer, though innocent of even any intentional crime, except as far as having intended to meet the poor murdered Bradford in mortal combat, could be deserving of the name.

But the bitterest of all agony, and that consciousness on which he could not even bear to dwell,—for there was madness in it,—was the thought of what his parents, his family, and his friends would endure. "However, I have the comfort of knowing they will not for a moment believe me guilty," said he, mentally. He then betook himself to long and ardent prayer, and fell into refreshing sleep.

Very different at the time of Henry's commitment were the feelings of his beloved parents to those of their unhappy son; for the day, the long-expected day, was now drawing near, when their debt of honour (as I may call it) was about to be discharged in full, and they were to appear in all their proud and high-minded integrity.

At length the day of the projected dinner actually arrived; and every one who had suffered in the slightest degree by the bankruptcy of Mr. Woodville, repaired to his house at the appointed hour, little expecting what was to await them there.

An invitation to dine where for some time past no dinners had been given, might perhaps excite surprise in all; and as a spiteful and detracting spirit is only too common, some of the invited began to fear that the Woodvilles were going to *live away again*, and had forgotten they had only paid fifteen shillings in the pound.

To such, I am sure that the cause of that dinner would give at least as much mortification to their feelings as gratification to their pecuniary interests; and perhaps the sorrow of the Woodvilles, which trod so closely on the heels of their proud but virtuous triumph, was not as unwelcome to such persons as Christian benevolence required that it should be.

The guests were assembled, and the dinner served; while an ill-suppressed sob of strong and pleasurable emotion occasionally proved the deep interest which Mr. Woodville felt in the anticipation of what was to come; and while he looked at one or two of his guests, to whom he knew an unexpected sum of money would then be particularly welcome, his bene-

volent breast glowed with pleasure, at the thought that he was about to gladden the hearts of those, who in his adversity had done all in their power to gladden his.

One gentleman whom he had invited did not come till the dessert was on the table, and just before Mr. Woodville, with a beating heart, was about to exhibit the canvass bags containing specie, and (where the sum owing was large) a draft on his banker to the amount of each individual debt;—and when this gentleman did arrive, his cheek was so pale, and his manner so agitated and strange, that he excited considerable attention mixed with alarm, in the rest of the company.

But Mr. Woodville was less alive to this singularity than his guests, as he and his wife and daughter were also too full of their own agitation to be aware of his.

At length, in an unsteady voice, Mr. Woodville addressed his guests; and having made known to them the purpose of his invitation, he gave to each the bag containing the sum, with interest, which for his sake they had been so willing to relinquish. But though all seemed affected as well as gratified by this unexpected and welcome circumstance, the gentleman who had last entered, whose name was Adderly, was so much overcome, that he rose from the table and turned to the window, to hide his emotion, which was ungovernable, when Woodville declared that that was the proudest and happiest day of his life!

He then, with a faltering voice and a shaking hand, filled out a bumper for himself, and hoped a father's partiality might be excused, if he gave as a toast, his son — Henry Woodville — who had denied himself the gratifications his present income afforded him, in order that he might enable his father sooner to discharge his debts, and resume his own usual mode of living. "And allow me to add," he said, "to my toast, my earnest wishes that you may all be blest with such a son as mine!"

Mr. Adderly now took his glass in his hand, struggling evidently for composure. But he had no sooner put the wine to his lips, than he set it down, and bursting into tears, said,—"I cannot swallow it — it would choke me — it would indeed." Then leaning his head on the table, he sobbed aloud.

Mrs. Woodville's *mother's heart* now took the alarm; and rising from her seat, she conjured him with clasped hands to explain the cause of this singular emotion, and to tell them if any harm had befallen their precious child, Henry.

Mr. Adderly did not immediately reply, for he could not; but taking a newspaper from his pocket, which he had received just as he was coming to the dinner, he gave it into the hand of young Harcourt, the lover of Elizabeth; who having read it, with a cheek pale as death, begged to speak to Mr. Woodville alone.—"Nay," cried the mother and sister, wildly, "we will go too." And in sorrowful suspense they followed where he led.

The paper contained a narrative of the whole distressing affair. And that family who hailed the dawn of that day with thankfulness, pride, and joy, now saw it close in agony, terror, and almost despair.

It was indeed some little comfort to them, to hear from their guests the strongest assurances that no one could believe Henry Woodville guilty. And when the unhappy father set off, as he did instantly, on the road to his son, he was surrounded, as he entered the chaise, by crowds of kind and anxious friends, some offering services, all expressing sympathy, and vociferating earnest wishes for Henry's ultimate triumph.

But still the way was long and mournful to the anxious parent, though accompanied by a neighbour and friend;—and heavily indeed the moments passed to that tender mother and affectionate sister, who, though forbidden by Woodville to accompany him, and consigned by him to the care of Harcourt, murmured for the first time at the will of this kindest of fathers and of husbands, and fancied they should feel less if allowed to be at the scene of trial itself.

But to return to Henry. Nothing now but this sad event was talked of in the houses, the courts of justice, and the streets of Abingdon. The causes then pending, however interesting, interested no longer; but the public mind was wholly fixed on this, which was to come on at the end of the week, and with which the assizes were to conclude; and, as is only too usual on such occasions, the unhappy Henry was prejudged, and he was pronounced *certainly guilty*, before the merits of the case had been heard in a court of justice.

Even those gentlemen who had witnessed the brutal conduct of Bradford, and had admired the mild but manly forbearance of Henry, were now so melted to pity by the wretched fate of the former, that they were disposed to consider Henry's conduct as consummate art; and as one of them (he who was to have been Henry's second in the duel) now remembered that Bradford expressed himself with great bitterness against "canting, plausible, hypocritical boys, who got on the weak side of shallow men, and deprived honest, unsuspecting young fellows of their rights and their bread;" this gentleman now concluded that Bradford was speaking *at Henry*. In short, in proportion as they had thought well of him, they now thought ill, and attributed Bradford's brutal conduct to the excessive ill-usage which he had received from the specious Henry.

The most material evidence against him was Tomms, the waiter who came to call Bradford;—but Everett also had been examined by the coroner; and having fortified himself by a very large dose of brandy, he was able to bear witness, with others, to a quarrel at table be-

tween Bradford and Henry Woodville; and he did it with a degree of firmness which astonished himself; but he was not pleased to find that he could not be allowed to leave the place, till he had repeated his evidence in a court of justice.

When Henry awoke the next day, and remembered that he had as yet no friend to advise with, he felt it a duty which he owed his own innocence and his family, to do all he could for himself; and he desired to see, as soon as possible, the first attorney in the town, and the first lawyer on the circuit. This gentleman was unfortunately already engaged by the attorney employed for the prosecution. However, the second in public esteem was at liberty, and he came to Henry's cell before he went into court.

There was something so open and so captivating in Henry Woodville's manner; his countenance was so beautiful and so prepossessing, and his voice so persuasive, that, as soon as he saw him, Sergeant Murray could not believe he beheld a man capable of murder; and he was inclined to think, that if he had killed Bradford, it was in self-defence.

Nor was his prepossession in Henry's favour at all diminished when he heard his simple narrative of his past life; of his circumstances; of his father's situation; of those of his family; and of his own habits and prospects down to the fatal night in question; nor when he witnessed those bursts of agonizing tenderness which were wrung from him, not by his own sufferings, but by the consciousness of those which his situation and danger would inflict on his parents and his family.

"I know not how to think you guilty for a moment," said the Sergeant in a faltering voice; "still, I must own, the circumstantial evidence is unusually strong against you; and could the by-standers prove that you were as drunk as Bradford when you went to bed, or could they prove that you had liquor after you were in your room, I should really imagine that you killed this unhappy man in the delirium of drunkenness, and have forgotten the circumstance entirely."

"But these facts of drinking and of being drunk, no one can prove," replied Henry, "because they never took place. I walked up to bed as usual, and took nothing after I got into my own room; but I shall ever bitterly lament, to the close of my now, perhaps, short existence, that through the whole of the evening, I allowed myself to be persuaded to drink more than temperance and my own ideas of right warranted, and that I drank so much ale before I went up to bed; for, had I been as temperate as usual, I could not have slept sound enough to admit of any one's entering the room, and removing my sword from my bedside. There is no doubt but that he who murdered poor Bradford meant to steal my pin, but dropped it in the bloody scuffle; I conclude that he was disturbed before he could take the money, and forced to retreat suddenly. I remember, too, that some one seemed to me to open my door at about three in the morning, and on my calling out 'Who is there?' retreated again; now, I suspect that this intruder was the murderer coming back for his spoil; but then *who was he?*"

The sergeant agreed with Henry in this opinion, but to the Who was he? it was impossible to reply satisfactorily. It might be the landlord, or it might be one of the waiters. However, I may say, the suspicions both of Henry and the sergeant fell on Tomms, who first declared his suspicions of Henry; and these suspicions determined the sergeant to watch and cross-examine this man on the trial with the most laudable and minute exactness and ability.

While Henry's manners and conversation were thus prejudicing Sergeant Murray in his favour, and convincing him of his entire innocence, a very different impression was making on the mind of Sergeant Rickwood, the counsel against them, by the brother and wretched father of the murdered Bradford.

Bradford had in many instances been a trial, and any thing but a comfort, to his father; still, when he saw him cut off in the prime of his days and the fullness of his errors, and lying a murdered victim on his bed of death, the unhappy parent remembered only that he was his child, and that the wretched youth could offend, and he forgive, no more! His other son, John Bradford, felt little grief for his brother's loss, but great indignation against his murderer; and firmly believing the hated and envied Henry Woodville was that murderer, (hated and envied by all the Bradfords, because he was universally beloved and more prosperous in life than they were,) he resolved to leave no means untried to convict Henry of the murder, and to bring the sentence of the law upon him.

No wonder then that Sergeant Rickwood's mind was poisoned by his clients against Henry Woodville, and even against his family; and that he believed,—for such was the representation of the Bradfords,—that Mr. Courtnay was a weak man, who had been led on by the artifices and falsehoods of the Woodvilles to think ill of his unhappy victim, and to take Henry into partnership to his prejudice.

Poor Henry was much disappointed at receiving no visit, nor even an answer from Mr. Courtnay, till the fourth day after he had written to him; but then he was repaid for his anxious suspense by the contents of the letter, which then reached him. Mr. Courtnay told him that he was a hundred and fifty miles on the other side of London, when he received his letter, and that he had set off for town on the receipt of it as soon as he possibly could; that he could as soon doubt of his innocence as of his own, and that he would be with him

the next day. He added, "I sent off an express directly to your father, who will, no doubt, be with you soon after me; — in the meanwhile, keep up your spirits, my dearest Henry."

Oh! pleasant indeed was this letter, and the prospect of seeing its benevolent writer, to the soul of the sufferer; and though he knew that Mr. Courtnay's testimony to his character could weigh but little against the force of evidence, still he felt that it would be a consolation to him to hear him give it.

He did not look forward with such joy to seeing his beloved father; as he dreaded to witness his parental agonies, dreaded for himself the terrible pang of knowing that he, who had once been his parents' pride, was now, however innocently, about perhaps to become their disgrace.

"Well," said he to himself, in the solitude of his prison, "how happy am I in the midst of my misery, to reflect that Anna Vincent knows me not, and that my hard fate can never afflict or wound the woman whom I love! It is quite a sufficient trial to know how much I am fated to afflict my parents, relations, and friends."

Mr. Courtnay arrived the next day, early in the morning, having travelled all night. The meeting between Henry and him can easily be imagined. But the hope of a favourable issue, with which Courtnay had entered the prison, was soon damped by an interview which he had with Henry's counsel and attorney, who not only felt the evidence to be of a very undeniable nature, but also knew that the minds of every one were prejudiced against the innocent accused. Fain would they therefore have put off the trial; but they found it was impossible; and the awful day, big with the fate of Henry Woodville, at length arrived.*

The court was crowded at a very early hour; and even ladies were led (as they believed) by indignation against the *crime*, to bear to listen to the trial, and perhaps to the condemnation of the *criminal;* nor once, perchance, did it come across their minds, as they sat expecting the appearance of the prisoner, to suspect that they were not led thither in reality by any virtuous abhorrence of guilt, but merely by *curiosity* and the love of *strong excitement.*

But all this boasted indignation (which was only too general amongst the persons present, and in the town of A.) subsided almost unconsciously, when Henry, accompanied by his friend Mr. Courtnay, appeared in court, and took his seat at the bar.

His youthful appearance, his uncommon beauty both of face and person, the sweetness of his countenance, which not even his trying situation could obscure; and the calm yet manly resignation of his manner, had such an instantaneous effect upon every one present, that indignation against the crime was forgotten in admiration of the supposed criminal; and when he replied "Not guilty," according to the usual form, he uttered the words in a voice so touching, and in a manner so assured, yet so unpresuming, that many a bosom heaved with pity and alarm for him, which had before beaten with anger at his name; and many a one wished to hear him proved innocent, who entered the court earnestly desiring to hear him pronounced guilty.

The wise and eloquent man who had to plead against him, soon discovered the favourable impression which the appearance of the prisoner had made on the court, and he drew from this circumstance fresh fuel for the fire of his eloquence; as it enabled him to warn the jury against being influenced by those uncommon fascinations of feature, countenance, and manner, which the prisoner certainly pos-

* Till now I had always believed that there was a law against trying any person for murder while the fact was recent, and the minds of the public inflamed against the criminal; and that this law was passed in consequence of the following circumstances, on which this tale was founded. But I find I was mistaken; and that judges are not forbidden by law, however they may be induced by humanity, to forbear to try any one *immediately* for a murder committed during the assizes then holding.

In the year 1684, two days before the assizes for the town and county of Norwich were over, Mr. Thomas Berney, son of Sir Thomas Berney of Norwich, and his friend, Mr. Bennefield, another young man, (the son of a country gentleman, I believe,) were in the evening at a tavern, drinking with one De Havers, a French dancing-master. About midnight, these gentlemen and this De Havers having "their heads inflamed with wine," a quarrel arose between Bennefield and De Havers; when De Havers, taking advantage of Berney's senseless state of intoxication, took an opportunity to draw Berney's sword from his side, and stabbed Bennefield to the heart. He then returned the bloody sword into Berney's scabbard;—"he (says the authority from which I quote) not having any sense in him to discern this wicked and cursed villain's cunning contrivance against his life."

Mr. Berney went home to his house, not knowing that his sword was bloody, "nor thinking any thing in the least of this barbarous murder;" but while he was in bed and asleep, an officer of justice came with a warrant to apprehend him for the murder of his friend, of whose death even he was wholly ignorant. However, he was put on his trial; and as there were no witnesses of the murder, the bloody sword was the only evidence which could possibly be adduced; and on that evidence alone, this innocent young man was found guilty, and executed in the Town Close of Norwich.

Many petitions in Mr. Berney's favour were presented to the king (Charles the Second;) but as Mr. Bennefield was of a family devoted to the Stuarts, the petitions against the prisoner were attended to, and the others rejected.

De Havers in the meanwhile fled to France; and being there reduced to the extreme of misery and want, he on his death-bed confessed himself to be the sole murderer of Mr. Bennefield, and bore a late but sure testimony to the innocence of Mr. Berney.

sessed, and which he was conscious would have impressed him only too powerfully in his favour, had not facts, too stubborn not to be all-powerful with his lawyer's experience, strengthened him unassailably against the prepossessing appearance which he beheld, and acknowledged himself.

The circumstances which he had to detail were indeed strong ones. The previous quarrel; the intention to fight the next day; the provoking accusations brought by the deceased against the prisoner, which (as the gentlemen present owned) nothing but his blood could wipe away; the evident agitation (as he could prove) of the prisoner, when the waiter came at five o'clock to call the deceased; his being up at that hour, ready dressed, and his trunk packed up for going away; his offer to bribe the waiter to delay calling the deceased; and lastly, his sword stained to the very hilt in blood, and his diamond pin found by the bedside of the murdered man, and broken evidently in the bloody struggle; together with the absolute improbability that any one else had done it, as no traces or sign of blood had been found in any other apartment, or on any other person; besides the fact of no robbery having been committed; — all these things, the sergeant said, made such a chain of incontrovertible evidence against the prisoner, as his experience had never furnished him with before.

This gentleman had a peculiar power, like Mr. Erskine, (now Lord Erskine,) in these days, of seeming to identify himself with the person for whom he was pleading. It was impossible almost not to believe that his client was not a part of himself; so powerfully did his feelings seem to be interested in what he said; so undoubtedly did his own happiness, if not his own life, seem to hang on the verdict of the jury whom he addressed; while "the grace of action, the adapted mien," which distinguished the great modern orator, whom I have named above, were also possessed by the gentleman in question, and proved a strong counterbalance to the interest excited by the interesting Henry Woodville. Nay, Henry himself could not help admiring the beauty of the axe which was thus laid to the root of his life; and was forced to forego the admiration which the talent of eloquence had previously and recently excited in him, when he thus heard how capable it was of bringing down destruction even on an innocent man.

The sergeant having ended his speech, called his witnesses; one of whom was Everett, who had taken care to hurt his eye, in order to have a pretence for hiding his conscious countenance by a green shade; and by affecting a violent cold, he gave himself a pretence to speak hoarsely and inaudibly. By brandy and opium he had wound up his nerves to bear the short period of his examination; and as Sergeant Murray was, unfortunately, so prepossessed with the guilt of Tomms, that he did not much cross-examine Everett, whose evidence was simply, that he witnessed the quarrel of the prisoner and the deceased; he was soon dismissed, and at liberty to leave the town even whenever he pleased;—and he did leave it instantly.

The cross-examination of Tomms did great credit to Sergeant Murray's acuteness; but as the man was firm in conscious truth, his evidence was in no way shaken, nor could his innocence be impeached in the slightest degree.

All, therefore, that Sergeant Murray could do for his client in reply, was to descant on the little probability that a being so amiable, as he could prove the prisoner to be, by incontrovertible testimony, could have been guilty of the crime imputed to him. While he was speaking, a note was handed to the prisoner, who having read it, leaned, quite overpowered, on the shoulder of Mr. Courtnay.

Sergeant Murray paused, and begged to read the note. It was handed to him; and as it produced emotion in him, he begged to read it aloud. But the counsel on the other side clamorously contended against it; and declared it not admissible to read any thing of the sort in that stage of the business, and certainly nothing likely to influence the judgment of the jury through their feelings. However, as Sergeant Murray persisted to read it, and the note was but short, Sergeant Rickwood consented, saying, that was he not sure of a verdict, from the evidence he had brought forward, he would not have allowed it.

The note was from Henry's father to his son, and was as follows:

"I am here, my dear and innocent child; and I want to know whether my presence, the presence of a father, whose pride and pleasure you have always been, and still will be, (for I know you will behave as you ought in this trial of your resignation and your fortitude,) would be a comfort and support to you; if so, I will come to you instantly."

There was a murmur of pity and emotion heard throughout the court when the sergeant ceased to read; and the judge broke the sort of silence which succeeded, by asking Henry if he wished his father should come in; but he answered in the negative, and the sergeant resumed his speech; while Mr. Courtnay went out to speak to the anxious parent.

Sergeant Murray, emboldened by the permission he had obtained to read the note, now begged leave to read a letter, which would exhibit the character both of the father and the son in their true light.

This was a letter from Woodville, senior, to Henry, which he received just after he was imprisoned; in which he told him that he was at length able to pay his creditors all he owed them, with interest; and that he had invited them to dine with him on such a day. The good man went on to describe the exquisite joy

which he should experience at that moment, which would be heightened to him by the consciousness that the filial piety of his son, proved by the savings which he had forced his father to accept, had enabled him so to act sooner than he could otherwise have done; and had thus hastened the moment of this great relief to his mind, and this restoration to complete happiness. But as a letter was not admissible evidence, any more than the note, and as it was much longer, the sergeant was forbidden to read a word of it. He persisted, however, to give the substance of the letter, and then called Mr. Courtnay as a witness to the character of Henry. This attached and amiable friend of Henry and his family was so affected when he rose to speak, that he could not utter a word for some minutes; but when he did, his words were as eloquent as his silence had been. Another witness to the same effect was now called—a young friend of Henry's; and he was unexpectedly succeeded by several others; all eager to bear their testimony in behalf of the virtue of their exemplary and beloved companion.

These young men had voluntarily set off from London, and other places, as soon as they heard of Henry's situation; and now, with glistening eyes and faltering voices, rose, almost clamorously, to demand to be put to their oath and heard.

"Gentlemen of the jury," said Sergeant Murray, — his own eyes glistening, and his own voice faltering after he had examined these witnesses, (and the counsel on the opposite, had, for form's sake, cross-examined them,)—"here I end my defence."

Sergeant Rickwood now rose in reply, though evidently with less ardour than he had shown at his opening speech. But he strongly enforced the necessity there was for the jury to be decided in their verdict by *facts* alone, and not by *feelings;* and with consummate skill he contrived to recapitulate those facts which most tended to criminate the prisoner; and to insinuate that the almost perfect virtue attributed to the prisoner by his friends, seemed so much beyond the reach of nature, that it served to confirm the idea of his being the artful and plausible character which the poor deceased reproached him with being.

This remark occasioned so loud a murmur of disapprobation that the judge was forced to desire silence in the court; and Sergeant Rickwood sat down, consoled under this marked censure by the consciousness that he had only done his duty.

The judge now summed up the evidence, and delivered his charge to the jury.

He did not speak long; nor did the jury deliberate long. Contrary to the general *expectation;* contrary now, also, to the *general hope*, was the verdict which the foreman pronounced, — for that verdict was a verdict of GUILTY.

An affecting silence now took place in the court, interrupted only by the ill-concerted murmurs of Henry's friends.

Henry alone, though very pale, was calm and unmoved; and replied to the usual question,—"Whether he had any thing to say why judgment should not be passed on him" — in the following manner:

"I can only say that sentence should not be passed, because I am as innocent as any one present of the crime imputed to me. But I feel that appearances are so strong against me, that I forgive the mistaken verdict which I have just heard; and own that had I been one of the jurors, I might have so decided myself. However, I trust that one day the real murderer will be discovered; and in the meanwhile I bless God that I die innocent, rather than guilty."

When Henry had done speaking, the judge paused before he pronounced sentence, in strong emotion, and the few ladies and women who yet remained in court took that opportunity to hasten from it.

Mr. Courtnay did not hear the awful and terrible words, for he was led out before the judge began.

Henry was now told he might withdraw; but at thoughts of leaving the court all his firmness forsook him, for he knew he had now to meet his agonized parent. But the trial must be gone through with; and he endeavoured to compose his own spirits, in order that he might assist his father to keep up his.

The wretched parent was, he found, when he entered the passage that led to his cell, supporting himself against the shoulder of Mr. Courtnay. But on hearing the sound of irons he started, and turning round beheld that it was his child who bore them! Then precipitating himself into the arms of Henry, he fainted on his bosom; nor did he recover till he was laid on Henry's bed, and found Courtnay and his son hanging anxiously over him.

I will not describe the scene that followed; I will only say, that the father and son tried to console each other with the consciousness that it was better for Henry to die innocent than guilty; and they flattered themselves that they believed and were comforted by what they said.

As the trial took place on a Saturday, Henry had two whole days of preparation, and the Sunday was passed by him in the way most becoming his situation, and most calculated to soothe his parting spirit.

But at length the trial which he most dreaded came; — the bidding farewell, first to Mr. Courtnay, and next to his father. And when he was left alone with the latter, they both felt how incompetent any consideration was to soften, to such a child and such a parent, the agonies of that moment.

Force alone, necessary force, exerted by the jailor, could at last tear the parent from the

arms of his child; and when Henry heard the grated door shut out that revered and beloved being for ever from his view, he threw himself in almost frantic violence on his bed, and wished to lose in madness the bitter sense of suffering. But oh! how he rejoiced that his father had not allowed his mother and his sister to accompany him to Abingdon! for how could he have borne to have witnessed that tender mother's agonies, and the grief of that dear sister, the play-fellow of his childhood and the dearest friend of his riper years! Fortunately he forgot that it was only too certain that his disgraceful death would deprive his sister of a lover as well as a brother; as it was impossible her lover's father, Mr. Harcourt, should allow his son to marry the sister of a man who had perished on a scaffold.

I have before said that the unhappy father was taken by force from the arms of his son, and that that force was exerted by the jailor; but tears were in his eyes as he did it; and when he consigned the nearly frenzied parent to the care of his son's young friends, who waited to receive him, he wrung his hand, and bade him be comforted, in a voice of such deep feeling and emotion, that the young men heard him with surprise and admiration, and wondered that a jailor could still retain so much real humanity. They knew not that it was one unhappy father sympathizing with another;—they knew not that the jailor himself had had a son condemned to death for a robbery that morning, though no one suspected the youth to be his son; and that in the sorrows of Mr. Woodville he commiserated his own.

Henry had refused the offer both of his friend Courtnay and of his father to attend him to his execution; as he knew that the sight of his father's agony would have considerably increased the bitterness of death, and have utterly destroyed that composure which he wished to maintain at the moment of trial. Therefore, as they could no longer be of any use or comfort to him, he wished them to leave the town before the fatal event took place.

But that they refused to do. There was yet a duty to fulfil, in the performance of which they expected to find a mournful consolation. They stayed to gaze on the cold remains of him whom they so tenderly loved; and to honour him, in the eyes of the world, by all the duties which faithful affection could pay, whom the sentence of the law had, in the eyes of the world, disgraced.

"The innocent victim shall have a handsome funeral, at least," cried Mr. Courtnay.

Nor did they fear to be interrupted in the solemn duty, by any insults from the populace; for so changeable is popular feeling, that the very crowds who followed poor Bradford to the grave, with every possible demonstration of pity for him, and with loud execrations of his murderer, were now prepared to follow with even greater compassion and greater regret, the unhappy youth whom the verdict of a jury had declared to be that murderer; and when the sentence of the law had pronounced him guilty, their ever-vacillating feelings proclaimed him to be innocent; and even the words of "Rescue!" and "Let's save him!" were heard amongst the crowd assembling to behold the execution.

But to return to Henry. When the first paroxysm of his grief after he had taken his last leave of his father had subsided, he sat down to the tender task he had enjoined himself.

This was to bequeath to his mother, sister, and early friends, some few tokens of remembrance, and to write to the two former a farewell letter, to prove to them that they and his father were the last earthly objects on whom his thoughts at that awful moment reposed; and to assure them that they would be remembered by him in his last prayers, before the fatal signal was given.

Having performed this duty, and commended himself to his God, he undressed himself and went to bed, and soon fell into a sleep as calm and as refreshing as he ever knew in the days of his happiness.

He had slept two hours, when just as the clock struck twelve he was awakened by the opening of the door of his cell, and, starting up, he saw with a beating heart that it opened to admit the jailor.

"Is it possible," cried Henry, mournfully, "that it can be day already? and that the terrible moment is so very near?"

"Quiet yourself," replied the jailor, in a low voice; "It is only twelve o'clock at night, and I am come to save you!"

"To save me!"

"Yes; but be quick and dress yourself:—Stay; let me take off your irons first." And while he spoke, the bewildered Henry felt his fetters removed, doubting whether he was not in a pleasing dream.

"Here, take your clothes and dress directly, I tell you," continued the jailor. "You must know that my son, a wild one to be sure,—but after all that, he is my son, you know,—was condemned to be hanged to-morrow with you, for a highway robbery; but nobody knew he was my son; else, you know he would not have been let to remain under the custody of his poor fond father. Well, the long and the short of it is, that either he must die, or I set him free and go along with him, and share his fortunes and try to make a better boy of him, if I can. I shall write a bit of a letter to leave behind, to tell the folks the rights of the business; and fathers will, no doubt, be not much inclined to blame one, as a child is one's own flesh and blood, you know;—and fathers feel for fathers, you know; and that's the reason I am come to take you off along with us; for some how I could not bear to see the poor gentleman, your good father, take on as he did;

and so I swore an oath to myself, that if I saved my son I would save his, too—and now I have said my say."

Henry could not reply; but he grasped his hand in silence. His mind was fully made up as to the propriety of his accepting the offer; and even if it had not been so, that love of life which nothing but excessive misery can subdue, now throbbed so violently in his breast, that fly he must, at all risks, from the unjust fate which awaited him.

The jailor then produced a dark juice, with which he dyed Henry's fair face; and having blacked his eyebrows and his chin, he put him on a dark-coloured head of hair, and then left him, to go for his son.

In another half hour they were safe out of the prison walls, and on their road to London; the jailor having deposited the keys of the prison and his letter (done up in a parcel) at the door of the post-office, directed to the governor of the prison.

When they were completely out in the country, the jailor and his son (whose faces were both dyed as Henry's was) gave a loud whistle, which was immediately answered by another; and soon after, a man and woman appeared, accomplices of the young man's, who gave them a bundle containing disguises for all three.

As Henry, though well-made, was by no means tall, they put a woman's dress on him; and with a basket on his arm and a pipe in his mouth, he looked like a sort of woman who follows a camp, or like a travelling gipsy; and the men not only looked like gipsy men, but the young one was no mean proficient in the gipsy language. The clothes in which they had left the prison they put into a sort of wallet, the jailor slung them over his shoulder, and then they resumed their journey.

When the day was so far advanced that the business of life seemed everywhere recommencing around them, they thought it expedient to retire from the road, and, like gipsies, sit down and burn their sticks, and cook their dinner; as their friends whom they had met, had provided them with every thing necessary; and by thus assuming the appearance and manner of gipsies, they got safe to London, and to one of the young man's haunts, there, at the end of the third day; while Henry fervently returned thanks to Heaven for his escape from death, and was grateful for life, even though obliged to pass one night in a place of rendezvous for housebreakers and highwaymen.

But the next morning the considerate jailor came to his bedside to advise with him what it was best for him to do. "I know," said he, this is no scene for such as you—it is quite too bad for me. But I must stay here for safety at present; and after the hue and cry is over, I hope to get into some honest way myself; though I fear," added he, wiping his eyes, "I can never get my poor boy from his bad ways."

"My kind friend," replied Henry, "while I and my father or Mr. Courtnay live, you may command our services. But at present, I, as well as you, must be secret in all that we do, and not be seen together. I have no doubt but that the real murderer will one day be discovered, and then I shall be able to appear again; and till then, how can I conceal myself?"

"By this time, no doubt, as your father and Mr. Courtnay know of your escape, they are both, I dare say, come or coming to London. So I would have you go to a room which I will get for you in a little alley hard by, and in two days' time you may venture to Mr. Courtnay's in this disguise, which alters you so that I should never have known you in it. Till then, you may, if you like, go about selling ballads and flowers, if you find staying rather lonesome."

Henry thought being "*lonesome*" much better than selling flowers and ballads; and having removed to his room in a dark alley, near Covent Garden, he waited there with no small impatience till the jailor should tell him that he thought he might venture to Mr. Courtnay's, who lived in Henrietta street.

Henry had ventured to walk out in an evening, and was at that hour so fearless while he did so, that he wished to go to Mr. Courtnay's at that time. But the jailor, finding that Mr. Courtnay's own counting-house, in which he usually sat alone, opened into and looked into a court which was open to the street, he advised that Henry should go to his house in the day, and pass this window; and if he was there alone, enter the room on pretence of selling him flowers and ballads. By this means all intercourse with the servants or clerks would be avoided; and Mr. Courtnay might be trusted to contrive the best possible means of concealing Henry in future.

Henry was at length brought to approve this plan entirely; and having insisted on giving the jailor, as soon as possible, some reward for his kindness, it was settled that when Henry saw Mr. Courtnay, he was to inform him that the jailor would walk under his window at such an hour that evening, like a blind man, playing a hurdy-gurdy; and that he would walk there till Mr. Courtnay came out, and gave him the promised recompense.

This plan was very satisfactory to the mind of Henry, who could not bear to receive so great an obligation without proving his sense of it in some way as soon as possible; and he well knew that his munificent friend would gladly double whatever he gave.

At length the jailor came to tell him he might, he thought, go to Mr. Courtnay's, and that he thought he had seen him at his own door that morning.

"See," added the jailor, "what I have

brought you,—put these in your basket when you go."

Henry looked, and saw handbills describing himself in the most minute particularity; and offering a great reward for his apprehension. He shuddered while he read; but as Henrietta street was a very little way off, and he knew that if once in Mr. Courtnay's counting-house he might be concealed, even unknown to the servants, he conquered his fears, and set off for the place of his destination.

He reached the door of the court in safety, and almost unnoticed, as such figures as his were too common to be molested; and looking in at the counting-house window, he saw his friend; but in vain did he try to engage his attention. Mr. Courtnay angrily waved him away with his hand, and continued to read the newspaper. He was therefore obliged to open the door and go into the room. On seeing this intrusion, Mr. Courtnay hastily rose and commanded him to go away. But Henry held out a nosegay, and one of the papers describing himself, to him.

As soon as the name of Henry Woodville caught his eye, Mr. Courtnay changed colour, and seized the handbill—"Have you any more of these vile papers, woman?" said he, seizing the basket; then tearing them all into a hundred pieces, he threw down the basket, and grasping Henry's arm, exclaimed, "If you dare to sell any more of those accursed papers, I will have you taken up, I will—"

What other threats he would have uttered I know not; but his utterance was suddenly suspended; for Henry, affected by even this impotent attempt to serve him, so indicative of affectionate feeling, laid his head against his shoulder, and burst into tears.

"My kind friend!" said Henry, in his own voice. More was unnecessary. Mr. Courtnay did not even attempt to reply; but he instantly drew down the blind, grasped Henry's hand, put his finger on his lip, to enforce the necessity of silence, and then locking Henry into the room, disappeared without uttering a word.

He returned in about half an hour, and then opening a small door in the counting-house, he led the way up a staircase, which communicated with the dwelling-house; and Henry soon found himself in a sort of lumber garret, but far removed from the rest of the house.

Mr. Courtnay now ventured to speak, and to give utterance to all the feelings of his affectionate heart.

As soon as he had recovered his emotion, he told Henry that when he had left him, he went to send the servants out of the way, that he might get the key of the lumber-room, (which was always locked up, because it opened on the stairs communicating with the counting-house,) and convey into it wine and other refreshments from a cook's shop adjoining. That done, he had locked the door on the outside, and was now certain that Henry would be quite safe for the present in that asylum.

Henry now, at his earnest request, related the particulars of his escape to him, and of his arrival in London. When he had ended, Mr. Courtnay exclaimed,—"Then neither here nor in London must you remain another night. The jailor you might trust; but his son may betray you to his accomplices, as I see the reward for your apprehension is considerable; and I will this moment set about putting in execution a plan to place you in a secure abode."

Henry then told him what he had promised the jailor; and Mr. Courtnay said he would take care to be in the way at the appointed hour, and the jailor should not have cause to repent his kindness.

Mr. Courtnay then went down the stairs into the counting-house, having first locked Henry in on that side also; who, with a thankful and lightened heart, threw himself on a sort of broken sofa beside him; and now feeling himself secure under the roof of his friend, he enjoyed the only comfortable sleep he had known since he quitted prison.

Mr. Courtnay did not return till the hour in which the jailor was to appear as a blind man; and he was already in the street before he reached his house. But he had not to wait long for his reward, which was thoroughly proportioned to the service.

The jailor then said,—"God bless you, sir, and the young gentleman! I know you will take care of him; and I do not even wish to know where you will put him;—it is better not—so I do not ask."

This was a proof of the jailor's honesty, and Courtnay left him with a lightened heart.

He now took a bundle from a porter who followed him, and carried it into the counting-house, having first seen that the clerks were too busy to notice what he did. He then carried the bundle into Henry's room.

His unlocking the door roused Henry from his sleep. "Come, my dear Henry," said Mr. Courtnay, "there is no time to be lost; I give you an hour to eat your dinner and to clothe yourself in this dress and wig, and then you must be off."

He then left him to dress; but returned before he had eaten his dinner, to tell him all he knew of his father, who, on hearing of Henry's escape, had accompanied Mr. Courtnay the next day to London, as no tidings of the runaways had been received, because they thought it likely he would seek shelter at Mr. Courtnay's. But that Mrs. Woodville had fretted herself into so severe an attack of fever, that her husband had been forced to return home without waiting for news of his son. "But no doubt the joy of your escape has cured her by this time," added he. "And now make the best of your way on the Berkshire road,

and by the time you are out of London, I shall stop and take you up."

Mr. Courtnay had gone in search of a complete suit of second-hand livery, with a footman's hat and great-coat, and as natural a head of dark hair to match Henry's present complexion as he could procure. And as a public masquerade, on account of some rejoicings, was going to take place, he was believed when he said that he wanted it for masquerade purposes.

He then ordered a travelling-chariot with four post-horses to come to his door as soon as it was dark; having previously told his clerks that he was forced to leave town on account of the danger of a dear friend. Then taking pistols both for himself and Henry, he desired the postilions to drive towards Berkshire, and stop to take up his footman on the road.

Henry was at the appointed spot; and Mr. Courtnay having desired him to sit on the box, gave him a brace of pistols and a blunderbuss, and desired the drivers to drive as fast as possible.

Mr. Courtnay had provided Henry with a green bandage for one of his eyes, in order to obscure his face as much as possible during the day; and while they drove along, he wore it over one eye.

I will not stop to describe Henry's feelings as he went along this now well-known road, so lately traversed twice under different circumstances; the first time full of hope and expectation of pleasure; the second, as a convicted murderer flying from justice. But I will proceed to relate Mr. Courtnay's plans for his beloved charge. He thought that Henry was not so likely to be sought for near the spot whence he had escaped, as at a distance from it. He therefore resolved to take him to Bristol, cross the Severn with him, and then see him settled in some lodging near Chepstow.

Accordingly, on the road, Henry officiated as his footman, and even till they reached Wales; but when once across the water, Mr. Courtnay produced an entire suit of clothes belonging to Henry, which he had left in a trunk under Mr. Courtnay's care when he set off for the races; and thus equipped once more like himself, except that his complexion was allowed to retain a little of its dark hue, they sallied forth in search of a place of abode.

Fortunately they found what they sought, at the house of an elderly woman, two miles from Chepstow, and in a field which extended to the banks of the Wye.

Opposite the sitting-room and bed-chamber, which were to be Henry's, (who said he came thither for change of air,) stood a small neat mansion covered with ivy and honeysuckle, which was, they found, recently let to a tenant who had not yet taken possession. But, with this single exception, the good woman said, she had not a rich neighbour near her.

Henry immediately (under the name of William Granville) took possession of his apartment; and Mr. Courtnay left him with as little *serrement de cœur* as possible, since he now believed he was in a place of security; and he knew that he could, by sending him books, pencils, paints, and paper, (for Henry was an excellent artist,) enable him to beguile pleasantly, if not usefully, the hours of enforced solitude.

Mr. Courtnay also promised to go immediately to Mr. and Mrs. Woodville; write to them he dared not by the post, nor could Henry; but he was the bearer of a letter to them from their now recovered child—recovered, as it were, from the grave.

It was now for the first time since his commitment to prison that Henry Woodville was able to compose his agitated mind; to arrange his scattered thoughts; to feel the reality of all that surrounded him; to take in, in all its extent, the magnitude and truth of his past danger; and to feel sufficiently grateful to Providence for the mercy vouchsafed to him.

True, he was now obliged to live under a feigned name, in a state of nearly absolute solitude; true, he must, for an indefinite term, live an exile from those whom he most loved; but then he had escaped from a violent and disgraceful death, the consequence of an unjust sentence, and was enjoying the comforts of fine air, sufficient food, and in a country replete with every charm that can allure the fancy and gratify the taste; while he also enjoyed that great benefit bestowed by misfortune —the conviction that he had friends who loved him, and who clung to him in his utmost need.

And were not all these things blessings! and was he not favoured of heaven! One thing alone, then, was wanting to his happiness — to have his innocence entirely cleared to the world; and even that, he believed, would one day happen; for he trusted, as any pious mind would do, that he who had vouchsafed to snatch him from the grasp of death, would also, in his good time, restore him to fame and to his family. In the meanwhile, he had health, competence, and a residence in a sort of earthly paradise—for such may the banks of the Wye be called.

But contented as the happy mind of Henry already was with his situation, it was about to become still more so; and fascinating as the scenes around him were, they too were about to become more fascinating still; for he was soon to view them through the sweet and flattering medium of love.

He had only been settled two days in his new dwelling, when his landlady told him that she saw, by the unusual bustle in the opposite house, that the new tenants were arrived; — "And they are," said she, "a lady and her daughter only, besides servants; I wish, for your sake, sir, there had been a gentleman, too."

Henry smiled, and thanked her; but, as he

never heard of "a lady and her daughter," without a sort of thrilling feeling, and a hope which, however disappointed, was always reviving again, he did not regret that there was no man of the party; but he did feel great curiosity to see the ladies.

Nor was it long before he had that gratification; for, having seen them walk out in the cool of the evening towards the banks of the river, he had followed them at a short distance; and on their return from a walk along the river towards Piercefield, he contrived to meet them. But what words can express his emotion and delight, when he found the dreams of his fancy realized at last, and that he at length beheld once more the only object whom he had ever loved! And she was living where he could see her every day; and perhaps he might become acquainted with her — perhaps he might even visit her! "Oh!" thought Henry, "whatever I have suffered, I bless the afflictions that have led to happiness like this." Henry could not certainly give a stronger proof that he was deeply enamoured.

But after the first moments of this happy delirium had subsided, he recollected that in his present situation he had no right to presume to be acquainted with Mrs. Vincent and her daughter; — for, what was he now? An outcast, with a halter continually hanging over him; a convicted criminal, who had escaped from the punishment awarded him by the law, and now seeking, in solitude and in disguise, to avoid the fate which even yet might ultimately be his! "Alas!" thought he, "with this stained complexion and these black brows, how can I ever dare to present myself before the object of my faithful adoration!"

Mr. Courtnay had advised Henry, as I said before, to retain his artificial complexion, brows, and hair; but vanity, and perhaps a better feeling, now led him to disregard this advice, and to resolve to get rid of his *seemings* as soon as he could, whether he became known to the Vincents or not.

Accordingly, to the surprise of his landlady, the dark-complexioned youth became every day fairer and fairer; but this she very naturally attributed to the fine air of Herefordshire. The next change was from dark hair to auburn; this, she felt certain, was a change not owing to air alone; but as, fortunately for Henry, she was not of a suspicious nature, she only supposed that before he wore a wig, and now he did not.

His auburn brows were now allowed to wear their own natural and becoming hue, and to harmonize as usual with his auburn hair; and when Henry said, "She shall see me as I really am, or not at all," he might believe he was entirely guided by integrity of feeling and principle at the moment; but certainly, if integrity inspired, vanity must have rewarded the ablutions and the change,—for the natural man was infinitely superior to the artificial one. Whether the rejection of all disguise was, under his circumstances, approved by prudence, is another consideration.

Mrs. Vincent was very soon, by different circumstances, thrown in the way of Henry's landlady, and they were mutually pleased with each other. Mrs. Vincent saw in *her*, one who was likely to prove a kind and useful neighbour; and *she* admired in Mrs. Vincent, an affable and apparently a very clever woman. The daughter was, she thought, quite a beauty, and very engaging; but then she was too young to be a companion to her.

In consequence of this acquaintance, Mrs. Vincent called one evening at Mrs. Evans's, (Henry's landlady,) and it was while she was looking over a portfolio of Henry's drawings, which he had lent her at her particular request.

The drawings were good; so much so, that Mrs. Vincent begged leave to take them home with her to show her daughter; and Mrs. Evans ventured to grant the permission.

Anna Vincent, on seeing them, pronounced the drawings to be so good, that they must be by the hand of an artist; and as her mother was very desirous that her daughter should obtain instruction, in an art of which she already knew something, Mrs. Evans promised to find out whether Mr. Granville would take a pupil.

When Mrs. Evans put this question to Henry, he was so choked with joy that he could scarcely answer it; but at length he said, — "To be sure I will—and gladly too;" and the delighted Mrs. Evans went over the way immediately, to convey the glad tidings, leaving the happy Henry at liberty to walk up and down his room, and express his rapture as incoherently as he pleased.

But Mrs. Evans soon returned with a message which damped his joy completely. "Mrs. Vincent's compliments, sir, and begs you to name your terms."

"My terms!" exclaimed Henry, starting,— "My terms! What does she mean?" But recollecting himself, he added, "Oh yes, I know now,—yes—yes; I will consider about it. Tell her, with my respectful compliments, that she shall hear from me to-morrow;" and the good woman left him, not as before, to joyous, but painful consideration. For, if he was paid for his lessons, he must become acquainted with them only as an inferior; and that would be an unfavourable circumstance for the success of his love, and was not, therefore, to be thought of. But as a gentleman, and a perfect stranger to them, what pretensions had he to become the teacher of Miss Vincent? But then again, he considered, that in his own real person he could never now presume to address her or any woman; and was he not forced to submit, through adverse circumstances, to the disgrace of appearing under a feigned name?

"Alas!" thought Henry, "as a hired and

paid drawing-master I am now a far more respectable person in situation than Henry Woodville, and have as good a right to address Miss Vincent,—therefore, pride avaunt!—and I will ask her so much a lesson,—not to be paid, however, till my lessons are at an end, and by that time perhaps all necessity for disguise will be over."

The next day, therefore, he sent Mrs. Evans over to acquaint Mrs. Vincent with his terms, which were accepted; and with a beating heart Henry prepared the next morning to be introduced to Anna and her mother.

Though he had seen them several times during the four days that they had been at the cottage, (as their house was called,) they had never seen him. If they had, perhaps Mrs. Vincent would not have been so ready to allow her daughter to learn of him; though Mrs. Evans assured her that Mr. Granville was a very quiet, well-behaved young person; with but a dingy complexion when he first came, but that the air of Wales had cleared it surprisingly, and now he was very like her poor dear Tom, who died.

Yes—they had never yet seen Henry, except the first night when they met him on the banks of the river, but without looking at him; as, with that conscious timidity ever attendant on feelings like his, he had shrunk from crossing them in their path, and had been hitherto contented with seeing them, himself unseen; or rather, I should say, had been contented with seeing Anna, who seemed, since he last beheld her, to be increased in beauty and in grace.

But now he was to meet her eye, and never (except when he used to dress for St. James's Park in hopes of seeing her there) did he find it so difficult to satisfy himself with the result of his toilet.

At length, however, the wished, yet dreaded hour arrived; and Henry, as Mr. Granville, was presented to Mrs. Vincent and her daughter by the good Mrs. Evans.

It is very certain, that when Mrs. Vincent and Anna first saw Henry enter the room, and beheld his graceful bow, his blushing cheek, and ingenuous countenance, the mother looked grave while the daughter looked pleased. However, Mrs. Vincent knew that she had always inculcated in her daughter a horror of a mis-alliance, and she trusted that her pride would keep a sufficient guard over her affections.

The young lady now, at a sign from her mother, produced her drawings, which, though much inferior to his own, Henry admired exceedingly; and at the end of the first lesson, the pupil and the master parted, satisfied with each other, and eager for the next lesson.

Mrs. Vincent, too, could not help owning she had rarely seen a more pleasing-looking young man, and she suspected that he had once been in a higher situation of life. Anna had thought so before; and perhaps it was not wise in her mother to confirm her judgment on this point by her own.

There were now only four days in the week to Henry; namely, those on which he went to give Anna her lessons. Of the intermediate time, he passed much in watching from behind a curtain, to see them go in and out. He used to rise at daybreak;—sometimes to make sketches on the water, and of Chepstow Castle, for Anna to copy; but he dared not walk out, now he had regained his complexion, when he was likely to meet boats on the river, or persons on the bank; and when he took his evening walk and met the ladies, Mrs. Vincent by her manner showed that she did not mean he should join them.

Insensibly, however, her cold reserve wore away; and as Henry assured her Miss Vincent would learn to draw from Nature much better if he accompanied her, she was allowed to rise very early twice a week, and with her mother partake of Henry's morning rambles and sketches; and sometimes when they had walked towards Monmouth, they returned together in a boat.

Still, he was not on visiting terms with them. But accident favoured him in this respect; as Mrs. Vincent fell into the water one evening, by overreaching herself in trying to save her handkerchief, which was floating away, while she was with Anna in a boat in the middle of the river; and she would probably have been drowned, had not Henry, who was passing, jumped in, and seizing her as she rose, succeeded in dragging her to land.

This was indeed a joyful event for Henry; and never had his ear drunk in such sweet words as now, when he heard the soft and touching voice of Anna hail and bless him as the *preserver of her mother*.

Mrs. Vincent, though alarmed, did not suffer from the accident; therefore there was no drawback to the pleasure of the *young people*. But to the joy of being preserved, there was to *Mrs. Vincent* a *considerable* drawback in the captivations of her preserver, who was already too charming, she feared, for the safety of her daughter's affections.

She now could not, without excessive ingratitude, omit to invite him as a guest to the house occasionally; as Mrs. Evans now told them the flute which charmed them so often on the bank, was played by Henry; and while he was therefore enabled to display another accomplishment, and Anna now asked him continually to accompany her on the spinet, and in her songs, Mrs. Vincent saw that there was no safety for her daughter but in removal; and, on pretence of sudden business, she told Anna that they must set off for London the next week, or the week after at furthest.

The paleness of her cheek, the tears that started in her eyes, and the dejection of her manner, would have revealed the state of her

heart to her mother, if she had not suspected it before; and Anna she knew could, no more than herself, have been blind to the evident attachment which beamed in the expressive eyes, and spoke in the softened voice of Henry, whenever he addressed her!

And he had saved her mother's life, too! and that tender mother knew this circumstance alone would have led her affectionate daughter to behold her master with eyes of tender and grateful regard.

However, unless Anna declared her secret unasked, Mrs. Vincent resolved not to own that she already knew it; and she hoped that absence and other scenes would remove the impression, which, as yet, only three months' acquaintance had deepened.

When Mrs. Vincent disclosed her intended journey to Henry, he was sitting with them on the banks of the Wye, and drawing a view which Anna particularly admired.

But when he heard the misery that awaited him, the pencil fell from his hand, and he was for a few minutes incapable of speaking; and when he did speak, it was in a tone so mournful! but he did not express any regret; he only said, "Shall you be gone long?"

"Some months," was the answer. And Henry, starting up, declared his hand shook so that he could draw no more.

The banks were now enamelled with that flower, radiant in Heaven's own blue, long known in Germany, and now known in England, by the name of the "Forget-me-not;" and as Henry was unconsciously gathering it, and then throwing it away, Anna asked him if he knew the German name of it. He replied in the negative; and when she told him, he gathered a large bunch of it, and declared that he would carry it home with him.

The next day he rose very early, and drew a bunch of these flowers; and when he next saw Anna, he begged her to accept of it, and to remember what it *said*.

What more he would have said, emboldened by the downcast eye, the blushing cheek, and trembling frame of Anna, I know not; for Mrs. Vincent now entered the room, and Anna, instead of showing the painting, with a consciousness very flattering to Henry, hastily enclosed it in her portfolio.

While Henry was thus winning the daughter's affections with her own free will, and her mother's against her will, his daily visits became almost necessary to the peace and health, *apparently*, of an obscure man at the extremity of the village.

Mrs. Evans was very good to the poor around her, though her means of being so were not abundant; and she soon found that her new lodger, like herself, had "a hand open as day to melting charity." She was also a great doctor, and a great surgeon also in her own estimation; and Henry, whose grandfather had been a physician, had early had his attention turned to medicine, with a view to his being brought up to it; consequently, his good landlady, on finding how well he talked on the subject, whenever she started it, used to consult him, now and then, on some of her curious cases.

One day she was so lame with the rheumatism as to be unable to move, which she excessively regretted, she said, because there was a poor distressed man in the village, whom she could not visit as usual; and she was afraid that he really wanted a fresh prescription.

Henry immediately offered to visit him in the evening. But as she was accustomed to see him at noon, (the time when he was at the worst,) and she knew the surgeon from Chepstow was too ill to visit him at all, Henry, who was now grown bold from imagined security, promised to go and visit the poor man immediately; and having received the necessary directions, he set off for his cottage.

"The poor man has," said Mrs. Evans, "a sorry jade of a wife, through whose means, it is said, he has been connected with smugglers; but she is gone frolicking somewhere, and he is always most patient and tractable when she is away."

Henry soon found the place to which he was directed, and entered a dark and dismal-looking dwelling, where, on a flock-bed, "with tape-tied curtains never meant to draw," he beheld a wretched-looking being, whose sunk pale cheek, and half-closed eyelids, (closed not in sleep, but with languor,) looked the very image of "pining atrophy."

He did not notice Henry's entrance; but when he kindly asked him how he did, and said he was come to visit him because Mrs. Evans could not, the wretched being started up from his pillow, and exclaimed, "For mercy's sake what voice is that I hear! and what do you come hither for?"

Henry gently explained his business, and who he was. But the man, after gazing on him with frightful eagerness, fell back fainting on his pillow.

Henry was not prepared for a reception like this; as Mrs. Evans had not given him the slightest hint that the poor man was delirious; but made use of the best means the circumstances afforded to restore him; and they were soon effectual.

When recollection was completely restored, he started up and looked wistfully at Henry; and finding how kindly he was supporting his burning head, and watching his wan countenance, he exclaimed, "I cannot bear it!" and pushing off Henry's arm, he sunk down and hid his face in the bed-clothes; but instantly after, starting up again, he desired to know how long Henry had been at Mrs. Evans's; and how long he meant to stay, and why he came there at all?

To such questions from a man in health,

Henry would not have thought it necessary to give an answer; but not wishing to increase the irritation of the sufferer, he mildly said, that he had been at Mrs. Evans's three months; that he came for the sake of being out of the world; and that his stay was uncertain.

While Henry said this, he was mixing a composing draught, which, when he had finished speaking, he offered to the poor man's lips, telling him it would do him good. But he pushed it away from him; and bursting into a sort of hysterical flood of tears, he exclaimed, "No, no! not from you,—I will not take it from you,—it would choke me!"

"That is unfortunate," replied Henry, "as Mrs. Evans will not be able to see you perhaps for many days, and the surgeon is ill; therefore, if you are afraid of taking medicine from me, I can do you no good, and had better not come again."

"Not come again! Oh! not come again! for mercy's sake, come every day; the sight of you will do me more good than any physic."

"That 's nonsense."

"No, no, no, no! it is not nonsense; and I conjure you," he added, "if you have any pity in you, to let me see you every day; and then, I will even take poison to please you. Promise me you will come every day."

"I cannot; it is too much to ask of me; but I will see you every other day."

"And let me hear from you, when I don't see you?"

"Perhaps so."

"God bless you! God bless you! And he will bless you; it is me, me alone whom he will curse and pursue with his vengeance!"

Here he really howled with agony; and Henry, sick at heart, feared that though this unhappy patient was insane, his insanity proceeded from a burthened conscience. Still, he recollected that even the good in a state of derangement accuse themselves of crimes which they are incapable of committing; he, therefore, suppressed the suspicion as unjust, and tried to soothe the mind of the sufferer by dwelling on the mercy of the Being whom he feared.

But the more he tried to calm him, the more violent he became; and all he said was,—"I cannot bear it!—don't talk so kindly!—don't, I cannot bear it!" Then suddenly seizing Henry's arm, he said, "Do not come any more at this time of day—come in the dark hour—come in the dark hour—I cannot bear that you should come in the day-light."

"I must come when it suits me best," replied Henry. "But now I must go; so take the draught, or never expect to see me again."

The poor wretch then eagerly seized it, and drank it off. And as it was a strong anodyne, Henry knew the effect would not be long in showing itself; he therefore waited to witness it; and had soon the satisfaction of seeing the agitation of the patient subside; and when Henry left the place, he seemed scarcely conscious of his departure.

There is certainly no passion which so wholly annihilates attention to every thing else as the passion of love. Had Henry not been under its influence, he would undoubtedly have seen something uncommon in the manner of this man, when he saw him, and in the questions he asked him, and in the words which he addressed to him. But so completely were all the business and all the interest of life now comprised to Henry in making drawings for Anna to copy; in reading books, in order to select passages to show her; in watching for the hour when he was to be permitted to see or to walk with her; in recollecting, when he left her, all she said, and all she looked,—that he insensibly forgot the sword of the law was suspended over his head; and also that he was sentenced to die, and might yet die, for a crime which another (as yet undiscovered) had committed. Nay—what, if he had considered the subject, would have appeared still more unaccountable to himself, he was now reconciled to what at first appeared a terrible hardship to him—separation from his family and his friends, and no intercourse with them by letter, save "All well," written in the inside of a parcel of books and other things, which Mr. Courtnay sent every three months; and sometimes a cold guarded letter, which he trusted by the post; in which, occasionally, a few cautious lines were written by his father's hand. So properly careful were they, lest they should give any clue to discover Henry's retreat, as Bradford and his son had solemnly sworn they would never rest till they had discovered him.

It would have been a great comfort to Henry Woodville's family and friends, to know that he had found in the joys of a first and still increasing attachment, oblivion for every care, and a sunshine for every prospect; and that even separation from them had ceased to be a misery.

When Henry saw Mrs. Evans again, he told her that he wondered she had not informed him that he was going to visit a madman, or, at least, a man in a delirium.

"Dear me!" she replied, "the poor soul is no more mad than I am; to the best of my belief, he is only a poor moped sinner."

"He is more like a raving lunatic," said Henry, "and as suspicious as those persons generally are; for he was afraid to take medicine from me, and asked me many questions of who I was, and why I came; and then, strange to say, he insisted on my coming to see him every day, but not to come till dark."

"Well, I can only say he was not mad when I saw him," replied the good woman; and the conversation dropped.

The next day Henry was too much engaged even to think of his poor patient, as he was to spend the morning at Mrs. Evans's, in looking

over both Anna and her mother, who had lately wisely chosen to take lessons herself, while they copied some sketches of his from the Wye, which they wished to take away with them; and after dining with them he was to accompany them to the beautiful walks about Piercefield, which, at that time of day, could boast little except the beauties of nature.

It was late when they came in sight of their own habitation. But before they reached it, a wretched-looking being suddenly started up from the grass along which he had thrown himself, and running up to Henry, said, "Why have you not been to see me? and if you could not come, why did you not send? I have been so wretched! and Goody Evans said she did not know where you were gone. But now I see you, and I am so glad!"

"My good man," cried Henry, kindly, (while the ladies listened with a mixture of fear and pity to the wild wan being before them,)—"I could not come to you, and I forgot to send; but do go home now the air is growing chill, and I really will see you to-morrow."

"Ay, to-morrow evening," he replied; "and I shall expect you."

So saying, he walked away with irregular and uncertain steps; leaving Mrs. Vincent and Anna convinced, as well as Henry, of his derangement. And Anna could not help saying, she thought he ought to be careful how he trusted himself alone with him.

The next evening, before he took his accustomed walk, (which always ended in meeting the ladies on the banks, if he was not invited to walk with them,) Henry went to visit the invalid.

"So you are come, are you?" said he; "thank God!"

"Yes," replied Henry, full of pity for the forlorn state of the being before him, who was left without any attendant but a niece, a child of twelve years old; "yes, I am come; and I hope to make your condition more comfortable, if money can do it, and what money can purchase. See, I have brought you a pillow," said he, taking a basket from a little boy who followed him; "and here are some provisions for you; and as your fever makes you chilly I see, at times, I have ordered you some coals. And—"

Here Henry was forced to cease speaking, by the violent emotion of the wretched man, expressed by convulsive sobs, by the clenching of his bony fists, and by every outward and visible sign of a soul in agony.

"Leave me! leave me!" he at length exclaimed; "I cannot bear it. Pray go—I am unworthy such goodness—pray go! for mercy's sake, go! But be sure to let me see you tomorrow, and every day, or I shall go distracted."

Henry at first hesitated what to do. But he repeated his prayers for his absence so urgently, that at length he complied; after having put the pillow under the poor man's head, who, as he did so, caught his hand suddenly to his lips, and then motioned him to the door.

Henry could not go to him the next day; but he sent a message to know how he did; and the answer was, "All the better for the message."

The next time and several times after that when he visited him, Henry found him quite composed, though evidently depressed;—and from the questions which he now put to him, he was convinced that his conscience was really burthened by some serious offence; and he urged him to send for the minister of the parish to pray with him, and give him that spiritual consolation which he seemed desirous of.

"No, no; the minister," he replied, "is too great a sinner himself to speak comfort to me. One word of kindness, and one 'God bless you' from you, do me more good than he could do me. And when you read the bible to me, and show me that the penitent sinner may be saved, why then I feel comforted—and then I think I can do any thing to save—"

Here he again fell into a violent agony of tears; out of which, when he recovered, his first words were—"Pray, pray let me never be a day without seeing or hearing from you!"

Henry would not promise to comply with this request. But so natural is it to the benevolent to enjoy the power of comforting the wretched being who hangs on them for comfort, that no promise could have bound Henry more strongly to a daily visit to the sick man's hut, than the consciousness that his presence spoke peace to the soul of the sinner;—nor did a day pass without his performance of all the duties of Christian charity to this miserable and forlorn being.

During one of his visits he found a very unwelcome witness of his kindness; for the abandoned wife of the man was returned, and, in Henry's presence, cursed him for a cowardly, canting, snivelling scoundrel. Nor did Henry's presence seem any restraint on her, for she was fortified by liquor against the fear of any one.

At the next visit she was even more disgusting to him; for as he came at an earlier hour, and the setting sun shone brightly on his countenance, the woman (who was more intoxicated than she was the day before) met him at the door, and exclaiming, "bless your beautiful face!" threw her arms round him, and attempted to kiss him.

With disgust and abhorrence too strong to be concealed, Henry threw the offender from him, who staggered up the valley, muttering curses on him.

Her husband, who had witnessed this scene, now broke out into self-congratulations that the drunken creature was gone to Chepstow, and would not return for a day or two.

However, she returned about noon the day after, and was present when Henry was sent

for by Mrs. Evans, to exert his influence over his poor charge. She had gone to visit him, with the surgeon, who was now able to attend; and he had insisted on bleeding him. But the man would not consent — declaring he hated the sight of blood — that he had seen enough of it; — and he raved so violently that Mrs. Evans wished to try what effect Henry's presence would have on him.

Accordingly, she sent for him, and he came. But neither his soothings and entreaties, nor the wife's execrations, could prevail on the refractory patient;—he declared the sight of the blood would kill him; and the point was given up.

Henry meanwhile could not help remarking the attention with which the sufferer's wife regarded him,—turning aside while she did so, to look at something which she held in her hand,—and looking at him with an expression of great malignity.

The following evening Henry was to accompany Mrs. Vincent and her daughter in a walk along the banks of the river; and as Anna meant to gather some wild flowers, intending to paint them, she had provided herself with an old newspaper to wrap them up in.

As she was unfolding it, assisted by Henry, who luckily for him stood with his back to the light, which was now growing fainter and fainter, — his own name caught his eye; and he saw that it was a detail of his escape.

Anna saw it, too, and exclaimed, "O dear! I am sorry I brought this paper, for I meant to keep it. It is that, my dear mother, which contains the account of that poor young man Henry Woodville's escape from prison."

"Does it?" replied Mrs. Vincent. "Ay, I remember what a great interest you always took in that unhappy person — for you never believed him guilty, you know."

"No, nor ever can," said Anna, eagerly.

Henry's hand now shook so violently, that he dropped the paper with the flowers which he was holding for Anna; and this accident not only gave him an excuse for stooping down to pick them up again, but, as he felt himself excessively faint, the attitude of stooping accounted for his being forced to lie down to recover, as he said, the giddiness that seized him.

"That proceeds from stooping so long and so low, after a hot and fatiguing walk, Mr. Granville," said Mrs. Vincent, kindly; "when we get home, I shall insist on prescribing some wine for you."

Anna said nothing; but her cheek was as pale as Henry's, who now, however, recovered sufficiently to proceed on their return.

"Yes," said Mrs. Vincent, in order to take Henry's attention from himself by engaging it on an interesting subject; "I never remember to have felt so much interest in any trial, as I did in that of young Woodville. I had heard my acquaintance, Mr. Courtnay, speak so well of him, that I wished him to be acquitted. But he was found guilty; and really, in my opinion, on incontrovertible evidence. What do you think, Mr. Granville—for I conclude you read the trial?"

"Yes, madam," he replied in a hoarse voice, "I have read it; and the circumstantial evidence is the strongest I ever saw."

"There, Anna," said Mrs. Vincent.

"Yes," she replied, "I own it is very strong; but I have seen as strong, and yet the innocence of the poor creature who has been hanged in consequence of it, has been proved at last. But indeed, dear mother, Mr. Granville has not yet said he thinks poor Henry Woodville guilty."

"No," said Henry firmly, yet in an impeded tone, "I never can say it; for I am sure Henry Woodville is as innocent as you are of the crime imputed to him."

"There, there — do you hear that?" cried Anna, triumphantly. "Oh, how I rejoice that he escaped! And you know, mamma, I always said I wished we had known him, and he had fled to us for shelter; for in our last house we could have concealed him so well!"

"Perhaps so—but we *should* not have concealed him, I believe. I could not have thought it right to have interfered in such a manner with the execution of justice."

"Of justice! But are you sure it was justice, mamma?"

"Yes — I fear it was; and under those circumstances I should not have thought myself justified in holding any communication whatever with the culprit."

"Culprit!" cried Anna — "I cannot bear to hear you call him so; and I earnestly hope, wherever he is, he will never be discovered; and I have no doubt but that one day or other his innocence will be made manifest. Do not you agree with me, Mr. Granville?"

"I earnestly hope and even trust it will," replied Henry, in a faint voice, the tone of which was so touching, and he seemed to speak with such feeling, that Anna turned towards him, and said just as they reached Mrs. Vincent's door—"Dear me! perhaps you know Mr. Henry Woodville? If so, what pain have we given you!"

Henry pressed her hand, but did not reply; and they entered the house.

Mrs. Vincent, as it was now dark, called for a candle; and having gone in search of wine, brought Henry a glass, which he drank with a shaking hand; but he did not offer to sit down, though he was engaged to supper, and the supper was ready.

"Why do you not sit down, Mr. Granville?" said Mrs. Vincent; "you do not seem fit to stand;" while Anna gazed on his altered countenance with tearful eyes.

"I am still less fit to sit in your presence, madam," replied Henry, with an assumed manner, though in a trembling voice; "nor, unau-

thorized by you, madam, will I ever appear before you again;—in me you behold that unfortunate person, whom though you pity you condemn—for I am *Henry Woodville!*"

As he said this he leaned nearly fainting against the door; and Anna, impelled by a variety of feelings, was springing towards him, but was checked by a severe glance from her mother, who, notwithstanding, was so overcome with the discovery, and the involuntary compassion and well-motived regard which she felt towards Henry, not only as a companion, but as the preserver of her life, that she could not speak for some minutes. But rising suddenly, she took Henry's arm, and with gentle force led him to a seat.

The action said much, and Henry felt comforted. She then reseated herself; and leaning her head on her weeping daughter's shoulder, burst into tears.

When she recovered, she said, "I little thought any thing could have weakened my conviction of the guilt of Henry Woodville. But, such has been your conduct since we knew you, and such is the evidence in your favour, borne by your countenance and manner, that I own to you, dear unhappy young man, that my belief is shaken. I can only add, that I wish to hear the whole story from yourself, when you are able to relate it!"

"I am able now," he replied; "and before we part, you shall know all my presumption, and all my misery."

The story was long, for Henry began with his first seeing Anna; and the whole detail of his love, and his hopes, and his wishes; and when he owned with manly openness, but with becoming modesty, that he delayed to attend to the interests of his love, in order to forward the honourable plans of his honourable father, Mrs. Vincent's parental heart yearned towards the pious child; and she felt it must be nearly impossible for such a being to be a murderer.

Anna, meanwhile, hid her blushing face on the table; but insensibly she drew her chair nearer to Henry's; and before he had finished his narration, it was on the back of Henry's chair that her arm and her head reposed.

To be brief—Henry's story had such an effect on Mrs. Vincent, that she assured him she was nearly if not quite convinced of his innocence. "And," added she, "if the wretched man fell by your hand, I am sure it was while you were so intoxicated as not to know what you did, or to remember it the next day. And, really, if you did not, who did, do you think, destroy him? Do you think he killed himself?"

"No; but I have strong suspicions that one of the waiters, who saw him display his gold, did it; and then was frightened away before he had secured the money."

"Yes," said Anna, eagerly, "if I had been your counsel, I would have examined and cross-examined pretty severely that witness, one of the waiters, whose name I forget, who wore a shade over his eyes; and I would have tried to find out how long his eyes had been inflamed."

Henry owned that he had since regretted Tomms had been the only waiter closely examined, because he was the only one suspected.

When Henry rose to take leave, Mrs. Vincent, whose journey had been delayed ten days longer than she expected, by unforeseen occurrences, now told him that she hoped he would not think her unkind, if she left her present residence on the following Monday, never to return; as, though a union with him under other circumstances would gratify her dearest wishes for her daughter, at present he must feel that, as a mother, it was her duty to suspend all intercourse between them.

"This is Friday," added Mrs. Vincent. "On Monday I shall be ready to set off; and on Sunday I shall be glad to see you; but it must be for the last time, unless the situation of things changes."

From this decision Henry's heart might appeal, but his judgment could not; and as Anna, with an ingenuousness which endeared her the more to him, had owned that were he in a situation to ask her hand, it should without any hesitation be his, he felt happier than he could have expected to be, when he returned to his home. But then he was relieved by the consciousness that disguise and concealment, to which till now he had been a stranger and an enemy, no longer burdened his mind; and he had also the proud satisfaction of knowing, that in discovering who he was, at the risk of being forbidden the house of Mrs. Vincent, he had made an honourable sacrifice of his happiness to his integrity.

In the morning, however, when he rose, he remembered with agony that he could no longer pay his accustomed visits, or take his accustomed walk; and his spirits were so depressed, that he said to himself, "I will not go out today." But though he was not conscious of it, the probable reason why he resolved to stay within was, that he might watch for a sight of Anna, and sometimes, perhaps, catch a look from her in return.

Nor did he, during that day, often leave the window of his apartment; consequently he did not visit the poor invalid; but Mrs. Evans did, and promised to excuse his not coming.

The whole of the morrow (which was Saturday) Henry passed within, partly from the wish of watching for Anna, and partly from indisposition; and as he concluded Mrs. Evans would visit the invalid, he omitted to send him a message, which he would otherwise have done.

But Mrs. Evans did not visit him; and when Henry, certain he could no longer expect to see Anna at her door or window, was contented to close his curtains, and throw himself on

the sofa, to gain, if possible, a little sleep, in the dark hour,—he was suddenly disturbed by the entrance of Mrs. Evans, who begged he would come down stairs directly, to pacify the poor sick man James, who was below, insisting on seeing him, and declaring, if he did not see him, he should conclude some mischief had happened to him.

Henry instantly rose and went down to him. At sight of him the wretched man clasped his hands in a transport of joy, and uttering "Thank God! thank God!" left the house before Henry could put a single question to him.

Henry had passed so sleepless a night, that he had only just breakfasted when the bell now rung for church; and as Mrs. Vincent had promised to receive him at her house on the Sunday, Henry did not scruple to go to public worship, though sure to meet her and Anna there; painful indeed it would have been to him to give up this last opportunity of worshipping with the beloved of his heart.

To church then Henry directed his steps. In the porch he saw the odious wife of James, who met him without any other notice than a malignant look, whose marked meaning he could not understand, and who snapped her fingers with a sort of triumphant contempt as he passed her.

After service was begun, two odd-looking men, strangers, entered the aisle; and as they were at a loss for a pew, Henry courteously opened the door of that which he occupied. They accepted the offer; and it was not long before they embarrassed him by the earnest and examining manner in which they regarded him.

Henry soon discovered that they had no prayer-books; he therefore lent them his; but he saw that they were incapable of using it, and was convinced that they were not frequent in their attendance on public worship—at least not in a church. They might indeed be sectaries; but they wanted the serious and devout demeanour of persons belonging to any set of worshippers;—and fears, painful fears for himself, took possession of his mind.

But he had power to recommend himself in the secret depths of his oppressed heart to the God of his salvation; and when church was over, he felt himself armed against whatever evil might betide him.

When church was over, he stopped in the aisle to speak to Mrs. Vincent and Anna, whose eye, like his own, watched the motions of these odd-looking men, and saw with alarm that they followed close at the heels of Henry.

Just as they reached the church porch the men passed him; then, turning suddenly around, they each seized him by the arm, and showed their warrant to arrest him in the king's name.

"Whom do you take me for?" asked Henry.

"For Henry Woodville—a prisoner escaped from Abingdon jail, and condemned to die for murder."

"I am Henry Woodville," he replied, "and I surrender myself. But of the murder for which I must suffer, take notice, all who are here present, that I am as innocent as you are."

"Come, come—that is cant we are used to," replied one of the men.

"We have a cart waiting for us, and to it you must go."

During this time Henry had not dared to look towards Mrs. Vincent and Anna; but now, in an agony which words would ill endeavour to paint, he turned round to bid them a last farewell, and saw the latter lying insensible in the arms of her agitated mother.

He therefore disengaged himself from the men, who were just preparing to handcuff him; and seizing the hand of the unconscious girl, pressed it again and again to his lips.

"You had better be out of sight when she revives, my dear Henry," faltered out Mrs. Vincent; "so farewell! God bless you and support you!"

Anna now gave signs of returning life; and Henry being again seized by the impatient men, who were runners from Abingdon, kissed her cold hand, and that of her nearly fainting mother, and disappeared.

When they reached the cart, he found fetters were provided for his legs; and when ironed, he was seated between the two men, and in that manner conveyed across the Severn in the packet boat, on the road to the jail whence he had escaped, leaving the mother and daughter in a state of mind more easy to imagine than to describe. But both had some consolation in the consciousness that they had assured him they did not believe him guilty of the crime for which he was now only too sure to suffer.

When evening came, the poor invalid, as usual, was anxiously expecting to see Henry; as he never failed to visit him on a Sunday evening, and read to him the prayers for the day.

But he expected and listened for him in vain; and, though scarcely able to walk or even to sit up, he was on the point of rising and setting off in search of him, when his wife, half intoxicated and with a countenance of malicious triumph, entered the hut.

"Do you see Mr. Granville coming?" asked the poor man.

"Mr. Granville indeed!" replied the termagant; "that canting hypocrite, that has made such a whining, praying, chicken hearted wretch of you! No—I do not see him coming; and you will never see him again!"

"Not see him again! What do you mean?"

"I mean that I have got some good out of the fellow at last; for I found out who he was. Why do you tremble and look so wildly, before you know what I have to tell you?"

The wretched man replied not; and she

went on to say, "Yes — I found out that he must, by the description, be that Henry Woodville escaped from Abingdon jail. And so I wrote a letter to the prison, and they have sent two men who have carried him off; and I shall have the reward — and he will be hanged. Yes—I have done for him!"

"Then you have done also for me!" groaned out the wretched man. "Gone! taken! carried back to prison, and to be hanged for——! He hanged, — he! — so kind, so generous to——!"

Here he fell back on the pillow Henry had given him, in wild and inarticulate bursts of sorrow; while his wife, declaring he was very bad company, left him to solitude and to woe.

As soon as she was gone, he rose and dressed himself, the firm and virtuous determination of his mind giving a sort of preternatural strength to his feeble and fevered frame. He then hastened to the ferry as fast as his trembling limbs could let him; and he reached it just as the second passage-boat was going off; he entered it, and was soon landed on the opposite side.

But how was he to pursue his journey? And while deliberating on what he had best do, a man in a cart, drawn by a swift horse, passed him, and, seeing his pale and sickly appearance, asked him if he should give him a cast. Gladly the poor wretch accepted it, and soon found himself some miles beyond Bristol, on his road to Abingdon; but as he went along he talked so strangely, accusing himself in so forcible a manner of a terrible crime, that the driver, thinking he was mad, made a pretence to get him out of the cart, and left him on the road.

This really brought on the delirium which was only in appearance before; and he was taken up on the road raving and exhausted, and carried to an inn near the place where he was found.

There, when he came a little to himself, he begged for mercy's sake they would send after Henry Woodville and the men who were conveying him to prison, declaring that he *himself* committed the murder for which *he* was to suffer; and being exhausted in uttering this declaration (which the bystanders attributed to delirium, and forced him to take a composing draught to assuage the frenzy,) he sank down exhausted, and fell into a sleep which lasted some hours.

When he awoke,—and he awoke quite calm and collected,—he asked if they had sent after Henry Woodville and his jailors, as he bade them. And on hearing that they had not done so, (because they fancied he only spoke in delirium,) he jumped off the bed on which they had laid him, in an agony of mind which it was terrible to witness; and rushing down stairs, conjured some one, for the love of God, to set off instantly for Abingdon.

At the door stood a gentleman's carriage, and the gentleman to whom it belonged; and he was at that moment giving orders to have four horses put to directly, as he was on his road to London; and he heard the waiter say, "Four horses directly for the high-sheriff of Berkshire."

Everett (for it was he, as my readers have long discovered,) looked earnestly in Mr. Irwin's face, as he turned round; and emboldened by the look of benevolent pity with which that gentleman surveyed him, he seized his arm, and begged to speak to him alone.

He instantly complied with his request; when Everett, falling on his knees, as soon as the door was closed, exclaimed, — "You see before you a murderer! and an innocent man will suffer for my crime, unless I get to Abingdon time enough to prevent it! For mercy's sake, then, let me go on the top of your carriage; and give me the means to get on as fast as possible! O grant the prayer of a penitent sinner, and let not an angel, as he is, die for such a devil as I am!"

The look, the tone, the manner of the pleader bore such strong testimony of the truth of what he asserted, that Mr. Irwin hesitated not a moment what conduct to pursue; and lucky was it that he addressed himself to a man who never saw misery but he was impatient to relieve it, nor wrong that he was not eager to redress.

In a few minutes, therefore, Mr. Irwin was in his chariot, with Everett by his side. He had the precaution (believing the wretched criminal had a very short time to live) to take with him pencil and paper in the carriage; and as they went along he took down Everett's deposition, interlarded as it was with expressions of grateful affection for Henry; who little thought that, while he was trying to soothe the misery of a distressed fellow-creature, he was befriending the man who had most injured him, and was thereby preparing the way for his own restoration to reputation, if not to life.

I need not say that Mr. Irwin resolved to carry Everett the whole way to Abingdon, nor that by the time Everett's tale was told, he was as much interested for Henry as Everett himself, and as painfully impatient to reach Abingdon; especially as they found on inquiry that the runners from Abingdon jail and their prisoner had nearly a day the start of them.

And though they travelled all that night, the heavy rains which fell the preceding day, together with their inability to procure fresh horses when they most wanted them, delayed them so much, that Mr. Irwin was at last forced to seek for a fleet horse, if such a one could be procured, to carry an order for him to suspend the execution till he arrived. But he found the attempt was vain.

Henry, meanwhile, on his arrival at Abingdon was informed that the sheriff of the town had resolved the execution should take place as soon as possible; for he was a relation and

friend of Bradford's, and consequently was eager for the punishment of the murderer of his cousin.

At first Henry's feelings were so obtunded by the suddenness of the shock which he had experienced, that he mistook despair for resignation; but now that he saw the hour of his fate rapidly and really approaching, he gave way to a bitterness of woe which till now was a stranger to him; and felt what an increase of misery it was to have to resign not only his family, his friends, and his life, but the object who was become dearer to him than life itself.

"And to die without seeing any one of the objects most beloved by me — to die without seeing HER once more, and without receiving one farewell look or word!"

While these regrets were uppermost, he resolved to petition for a few days' respite. But when he recollected what his friends and his father had endured at their last parting, and how much Anna would endure on taking a last farewell of him, he suppressed all idea of soliciting so selfish an indulgence; and resolved to write instead of endeavouring to speak his last adieus.

He did so, and had scarcely concluded them, when he was told that the ordinary waited without; and that, as the fatal moment was arrived, he must prepare for immediate execution.

The high-sheriff meanwhile, and his nearly exhausted companion, were with jaded horses (no others having been to be procured) making their way towards Abingdon, through a sleepless and anxious night. At length however, in the morning, as the clock struck nine, they drove into the town, and saw a crowd assembled before the gate of the prison.

"O merciful Father! grant that we are not too late!" cried Mr. Irwin; while the parched tongue of Everett cleaved to the roof of his mouth.

The next moment, however, they saw the executioner just preparing to do his office, and Henry calmly submitting to it.

"Stop, stop!" cried Mr. Irwin, waving his handkerchief from the window, but not yet near enough to be heard; and Everett as vainly shook his emaciated hand out on the other side.

But at length the high-sheriff's livery was seen, and his carriage recognised; and while he continued to wave his handkerchief, and the horses to advance, the crowd hailed it as a signal of deliverance to the interesting criminal; and "A reprieve! — a reprieve! — The high-sheriff!—the high-sheriff!" sounded through the throng.

In a moment they made way for the horses, and the carriage stopped by the cart.

In one moment more the footman had let down the step; and, supporting Everett under the arm, Mr. Irwin ascended the scaffold with him.

As soon as Henry saw Everett, who stretched out his arms imploringly to him, he came forward, tottering and fettered as he was, to meet him.

"I—I murdered Bradford! — I am the real murderer!" he exclaimed, turning to the crowd; then falling at Henry's feet, he tried to clasp his powerless arms around him; and murmuring out, "Best of men, forgive me!" fell senseless on the ground.

Henry, overcome with a variety of emotions, was unable to assist him, and for a moment lost all consciousness himself. He however soon recovered to thankfulness and to joy. But no application could restore the guilty but penitent Everett; and they soon found that he was gone for ever.

"Thank God!" cried Henry, as he bent mournfully over him; "he died while performing a just and virtuous action; and may it be deemed an acceptable service!"

There is no power that can in a moment of strong excitement control a multitude; even the dread of personal danger is often found, at first, insufficient.

It was the case now. Mr. Irwin having come in front of the scaffold, desired to read aloud the deposition of Everett.

He did so,—not omitting the unhappy man's attributing his resolution to sacrifice himself to save Henry's life, to his deep sense of the gratitude he owed him.

And when he had concluded, the air, after a short pause as it seemed of strong emotion, rang with shouts and loud tokens of applause and joy.

Every thing needful having been gone through, Mr. Irwin led Henry to his carriage; in which they were both no sooner seated, than the horses were off in a moment; and the carriage and its agitated inmates were dragged in triumph to the principal inn in the town. Nor did that expression of their feelings content them, but they insisted on Henry's showing himself to them at the window of the inn.

While he was thus indulging their feelings at the expense of his own, and Mr. Irwin was throwing money amongst them, meaning to disperse them, but in reality making them more clamorous, a post-chaise drove up to the door, and a lady looked out of the window. At sight of Henry (pale, but evidently happy, bowing to the applauding multitude,) she uttered a faint shriek, and withdrew her head. But Henry had recognised her, and swift as thought he was at the door of the carriage; in a few moments he had borne the speechless but still consciously happy Anna into the house, followed by her trembling but as happy mother; for the appearance of things explained itself; and Henry, if at liberty and hailed by

the multitude, must have been not only innocent, but proved so beyond a doubt.

Why need I longer prolong my narrative? Suffice, that Henry's happiness, like a snowball, increased as it went; for while hastening with Anna and her mother, as fast as four horses could carry them, on the road to London, they met Mr. Woodville and Mr. Courtnay on their way to Abingdon. And the now happy father pressed, with pious thankfulness, to his heart the son that was lost, and was now restored again.

Of this meeting, Mr. Irwin, who had followed the party in his carriage, was a delighted and sympathizing spectator; and when he parted from this group of happy beings, it was with mutual promises to meet again.

Nor was the consequence of Henry's cleared reputation, and restoration to his family, productive of the highest happiness in life to himself and Anna alone. Mr. Harcourt, the father of his sister's lover, now gave a glad consent to the union of Elizabeth Woodville to his son; and the day that united them, united also Henry Woodville to Anna Vincent.

THE QUAKER,

AND THE

YOUNG MAN OF THE WORLD.

There is nothing, perhaps, which occasions so curious a mixture of heterogeneous characters, as travelling in stage-coaches; and persons meet there, whom the chances of life could not well bring together in any other place.

A very fine-looking young man, whose dress bespoke him to be a beau of the first order, found himself one day in a stage-coach, *tête-à-tête* with an elderly man belonging to the people called *Friends;* or, to speak in a more intelligible language to my readers in general, with a plain quaker, that is, a quaker dressed according to the strictest rules of the society to which he belongs.

It was very soon evident to the quaker, that his young companion was unhappy; and as benevolence was a leading trait in his character, he wished, no doubt, as Sterne says, that it was now as it was in the days of Esdras, and that he could have said to him, "Brother, what aileth thee, and wherefore art thou disquieted?"

But the common usages of society forbade him thus to speak. However, all he could do, he did; he tried to draw him from the indulgence of his own painful thoughts into conversation, and sometimes he succeeded.

The conversation, too, was such as to give each a favourable impression of the other, as they agreed, they found, on some subjects of importance.

While the coach stopped for the coachman to deliver parcels, not long after they first set off, a poor lame negro came and begged at the door, and both the gentlemen took out money to relieve him, for disease really seemed to have marked him for his own; but before any questions could be put to him, the coachman smacked his whip, and there was only time for the donations to be dropped in his hat.

"It is certainly wrong," observed the quaker, "to encourage beggars in general; but this poor man was so evidently diseased, I could not help giving him a little assistance, because thou knowest he may really not be able to work."

"True, sir; besides, he was a black man; and whenever one of that injured race begs of me, I cannot refuse him, because I remember the original cruelty and injustice which probably brought him or his parents into a strange land, and made him an object of charity."

"I sympathize with thee on that subject, and am glad to hear thee admit the poor African's claim to be considered as 'a man and a brother.'" This led to a wide discussion of abolition, emancipation, and so on. Cruelty to animals was next expatiated upon; and as our travellers agreed thoroughly on these subjects, it is to be supposed that each thought the other very sensible and very humane.

The prepossession on one side was soon after considerably strengthened by an accident. The coachman drove against a post; and before our travellers could get the glasses down, (which the rain had forced them to draw up,) the coach overturned with great violence.

The young man, whose name was Frank Warburton, was not at all hurt himself; but he was much distressed at seeing that the glass had cut open the forehead of the quaker, and on hearing him say that in falling he had dislocated his wrist. As soon, therefore, as they could quit the coach, Warburton mounted one of the horses, and asking where the first surgeon could be found, he galloped off full speed, to a distance of nearly two miles, in search of him; while the good quaker looked after him with grateful emotion, and said to himself, "Thou art truly kind, poor youth! and I wish I knew what ails thee!"

Warburton returned at as full speed as he went, and brought word that the surgeon was coming.

"I am obliged to thee, much obliged to thee," said the quaker. "But do sit down. Dear, dear, how ill thou art! I fear thou wilt suffer for thy kindness, and that would grieve me."

The surgeon arrived soon after; and having dressed the wound, and pulled in the wrist, the quaker, whose name was John Reynolds, declared himself quite able to resume his journey, as soon as the coach was made fit to go in.

"And will you venture in the coach again?" said Warburton.

"If thou dost, why should not I?"

"I, sir, have no reason to fear, as I have escaped so well."

"I ask thy excuse there, for thy turn to be hurt is still to come, and mine is over; but I think the best security for us both is, that the driver's recent accident will make him doubly careful."

"But, sir, will not the jar of the coach hurt your limb?"

"So would the jar of a chaise; therefore I am willing to go in the coach as thou art."

"For my own part, sir, I care not how I go," replied the young man, "provided I go with you."

"I thank thee, friend. What is thy name?"

"Frank Warburton."

"Well, I thank thee, Frank Warburton. I do think," he added, looking in the glass, "I have a very warlike appearance from this patch on my forehead, for a man of my peaceful persuasion;—what will Friends think when I appear at our quarterly meeting to-morrow?"

The coach was now ready to set off, and our travellers proceeded on their journey.

The young man's attention to his companion now became truly gratifying to the latter, and honourable to himself. He insisted on holding up the elbow of the dislocated wrist, in order to keep it steady, and was continually calling out to the driver to avoid the stony parts of the road.

There is not in the daily intercourse of life any charm like attention—and attention in *trifles;* and a heart so given to be kind itself, as that of the quaker's, was formed to feel deeply, benevolent attention from another; and again and again the good man said to himself, "I wonder, poor youth! if thou needest a friend, and if I could be a friend to thee?"

While these thoughts were passing in the quaker's mind, he sunk into silence; and (as he always did, when not roused by his companion's questions, or his anxiety for him,) Warburton fell into a reverie, from which he occasionally abruptly started; then, by throwing himself about, and heaving very deep sighs, he convinced the quaker more than ever that his mind was painfully burthened.

"I will try," thought Mr. Reynolds, "to find out what is the matter with him, and youth is usually communicative."

The coachman now stopped to throw a parcel down for a young woman to catch; but she missed it, and as it fell into the road she took it up quite covered with mud.

"I thought she would miss it," cried Warburton, with an unusual expression of sarcastic bitterness on his face; "women are always so awkward! they are to be trusted neither in great nor little things; they are all alike," he added, beating his boots very audibly with a small stick which he had in his hand.

"So, so!" thought the quaker, "then a woman, some way or other, is at the bottom of this kind boy's uneasiness;—then I fear I can do little for him; but I owe him some kindness in return for his, and I will see what I can do." And while he was thus ruminating, Warburton was muttering between his closed teeth, "Who lost Mark Antony the world? A woman!"

"That Mark Antony was but a silly fellow," observed the quaker, smiling; "and thou art but young in life yet, to have had reason to entertain such a low opinion of women as thou seemest to do; thou must have been unfortunate in thy associations, Frank Warburton?"

"Not more so than most other men, I dare say."

"I am obliged to thee, then, for giving me a new cause for thankfulness; for, if association with women gives most men reason to think ill of them, my happier experience has made me value them the more, the more I have known of them; and I think this a favour."

"And so it is. But, sir, if you had ever suffered like me—had you loved, revered a being as I have done, and then been forced to forego your high opinion of that beloved being, and to find that she whom you thought superior to the rest of her sex, was weak, like the weakest of them—then, sir, you would not wonder that I execrate the whole sex for her sake."

"Yes, I should; for I always wonder at injustice; and I cannot, to oblige thee, think ill of my mother, my wife, and my daughter, even couldst thou prejudice me against the rest of the sex."

"Your mother, sir! Have you a motner?"

"No, not now."

"And was she a good woman, sir?"

"I believed her so, according to the usual acceptation of the word *good.*"

"Believed her so!—but was she really good?"

"Yes, in my opinion she was;—and I thought her the more so, because she did not think herself so."

"And before she died, sir, she did nothing to forfeit your good opinion?"

"Nothing,—but much to increase it."

"Happy you, sir! But do not talk of your mother's goodness to me, sir, as I can't bear it, indeed I can't!"

The good friend looked at him in amazement, and coolly replied "I really ask thy excuse; but how could I be aware that I should distress thee, by assurances of my mother's goodness?"

Here the coach stopped, and the travellers alighted. Warburton had always intended to dine at this place, though the quaker had not; however, as he was kindly curious to know more of his fellow-traveller, he was resolved to dine there also, though his own carriage was waiting for him at the inn. The young

man had by this time found that the conversation of his companion was better than his own thoughts; he was therefore very glad of this respite from them; and the dinner meal passed pleasantly away. But the cloth was scarcely removed, and the wine set on the table, when Warburton sunk into a reverie again; and starting up, he traversed the room with hasty strides, exclaiming, "No, I never, never will forgive her! I never will see her again, while I live! To form such a marriage! No, it is not to be pardoned! and while I live, I never will forgive her!" So saying, he reseated himself.

"Though thou hast not addressed thy discourse to me, I shall act," said the Friend, "as if thou hadst done so, and reply to it. Thy resolve is a very unchristian one;—and who is it that thou wilt never forgive? Is it thy affianced mistress! has she married another, and forgotten thee?'

"Oh, no! I have no mistress, and never was in love yet."

"Well, well, it is thy sister, perhaps, who has married to displease thee, and whom thou wilt not forgive, though thou art commanded 'to be reconciled to thy brother.'"

"My sister! No, I have no sister. The person whom I will never see, and never forgive, is my mother."

"Thy mother!" cried the quaker in a tone of excessive surprise; "poor, unfortunate woman!—how ill she must have brought thee up!"

"Sir, I do not understand what you mean by that. My mother is a very clever woman, and a good woman, sir, and has been a good mother."

"So, then, it is a *good* mother whom thou wilt never forgive! Worse and worse! But I tell thee she has not been a good mother; she has not done her duty by thee, if she has not taught thee, and from the best authority, to forgive injuries."

"She has not taught me to forgive such injuries as she has done my brother and me."

"That is, she has not taught thee one of the first of duties—to honour thy father and thy mother."

"I suppose, sir, you are preaching to me," replied Warburton, angrily.

"Yes, according to *thy* ideas of preaching, I am; but not according to *mine*. But come, I am pleased with thy bearing my interference so well; and I really wish to serve thee in return for thy service to me; so do sit down and tell me thy complaint against thy mother."

"Why, sir, she is married! married to a man who was only my father's clerk, originally, and then was his partner; a man of no family! And to think of her giving us such a father-in-law!—a man whom I am sure she could not love. What her motive could be we cannot imagine; but we shall both be of age in two years, and then we mean to leave England, and never see her more. In the meanwhile—"

"Is she a young woman?"

"Oh no—turned fifty."

"Is her husband rich?"

"Very."

"Is she well jointured?"

"Yes."

"Did she love thy father?"

"Tenderly."

"Is her husband an artful man?"

"No; and till this event my brother and myself thought highly of him, and he has always been truly kind to us."

"The marriage surprises me. But, very likely, there are palliating circumstances we know not of. Still, its strangeness ought not to lead thee to such undutiful violence against thy mother. Dost thou forget who teaches us to 'forgive our enemies as we hope to be forgiven'—and is a child not to forgive his parent?"

"Well, well, I may forgive her; but I will never see her again."

"Then thou dost not *forgive*. True forgiveness can only show itself by an overt act; and if thou wilt not *see*, thou hast not *forgiven* thy mother. And, really, I cannot see the great hardship of the case. Thou and thy brother have independent fortunes; and thy mother has married a rich and respectable man, whose only faults are, that he was once a clerk in the house where he is now a principal; that is, that he learnt his business before he undertook it, and that he is become thy father-in-law!"

"But, sir, for an elegant woman like my mother to marry a man who really is not presentable!"

"'Not *presentable!*'—what may that be, pray? Dost thou mean not presentable at court? But is he presentable, as much as frail man can be, in the highest of *all* courts? that is the only important capability—and that thou dost not deny. But keep thy seat, and do not shake thy knee in that unquiet manner. I will tell thee my story in return for thine:—I lost my father when I was about thy age; and he was a father to be proud of, if pride were not a feeling to be conquered; and I had also pride in my mother, and I loved her dearly. I left home about two years after my father's removal, in order to establish some commercial correspondences, when news reached me from my mother of her intention of marrying Robert Hickman, a man inferior to herself in situation—an honest man, but scarcely in the line of a gentleman amongst us, and with a large family of children by a first wife! and she added, that she was then going before meetings."

"Shocking!" exclaimed Warburton; "Why this was a worse marriage than my mother's."

"Much worse."

"Well, sir, to be sure you did not forgive her soon, or see her soon?"

"Young man, it never came into my head to conceive it possible that a Christian should not forgive any one; how then was it possible for me not to forgive a parent? And after a few hours of painful reflection, I wrote kindly to her; earnestly hoped that the step which she was going to take would make her happy; and being at Norwich at the time, I sent her a piece of light coloured bombazine for wedding gowns."

"Astonishing indulgence indeed, sir! Before I would have given my mother a wedding gown, I would——"

"Have let her perish, no doubt," replied the friend, smiling sarcastically. "Well, it was good for the Norwich weavers that I was of a contrary opinion; and I had resolution to return home time enough to be at her wedding; but I must own it was a trial to me, though it was softened to me when I found Robert Hickman had been her first love; — still it was a trial."

"And one no power on earth could have made me to undergo."

"Nor me. The power that influenced me to bear it was *not of earth:* but she was my mother, and I did my best to 'honour her.'— But thou hast yet to hear more of my misdeeds, as thou wilt call them. I had scarcely been settled two years in a business in London, when my father-in-law died, leaving his affairs much disordered, and my mother *his* five children to maintain."

"It served her right."

"Poor thing! she thought so too, I fear!"

"Well, what did you do for her, sir?"

"The only thing that I could do. I gave up my own business;—I left London, and took the management of her husband's trade and affairs, and I worked to help her to maintain *her husband's children.*"

"No!—did you really?"

"I did."

"Sir," said Warburton, squeezing the good man's hand till he almost made him call out, "I honour, but I cannot imitate you."

"That is unfortunate; for I wished thee to imitate and not honour me;—for what honour is there due to simply doing one's duty? Honour, indeed! Ah, that is worldly language, and means little!"

"Means little! Indeed I mean what I say; I never say what I do not mean."

"Yes, thou dost; for thou sayest thou wilt never see thy mother, and never forgive her; and yet I dare say thou wouldst gladly go and throw thyself on her neck this moment."

"You are mistaken, sir; though I must own I do not feel as angry as I did."

"Well, I will go on with my story. I left off at my taking my father-in-law's business. I was active and cautious, and I restored order to the affairs. In short, we got money; I portioned off two of the girls, put the two boys into trade, and—but I really am afraid of telling thee what I did by the third girl, thou will think it such a high crime and misdemeanour."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Yes; for I made her my wife! There was another misalliance, thou seest."

"Well, sir, I can only hope that the young lady was deserving of you."

"She is one of the best of wives;—but it is wrong to boast."

"Then, sir, you have been well rewarded for your goodness."

"I wish thou wouldst not use such strong words as goodness in such a light manner; but that is the fault of thy education and thy association with worldlings."

"I am but a worldling myself."

"I know it; and so much the worse for thee; yet I see much about thee that I like; and now, Frank Warburton, attend to the conclusion of my story. My poor mother, after a lingering illness, lay on the bed of death; and then it was that I reaped what thou wouldst call the reward of all that I had done for her; for she thanked me so touchingly, owned her weakness in marrying, but could not regret it, as it had proved my love for her, and, as she was pleased to say, tried and shown my worth. I will not, cannot, *ought* not to tell thee all she said; but it was sweetly soothing to hear such words from a parent; a dying parent too; and when I looked my last look at her coffin, as the first dust was thrown on it, I turned away with such a feeling of satisfaction here —" (laying his hand on his heart.) "Now listen to me, Frank Warburton; — if thy mother were to be suddenly called away, would thy feelings be as comfortable as mine?"

Warburton could not speak; but he laid his head on the table, and burst into tears. When he recovered himself, he owned, in the agony of his feelings, that he had written in the first paroxysm of his anger, in his brother's name and his own, a very severe letter to his mother, renouncing her as a parent, and vowing he would never enter the doors of the man whom she had disgraced herself by marrying.

"Poor thing! how I feel for her! It must be so bitterly painful for a parent to be renounced by a child; and thee, poor rash boy! how I pity thee! if she should fall ill, and if thy letter should destroy her!"

"Sir, if you have any humanity, do not conjure up that horrible image again."

"No, not if thou wilt conjure it away thyself, by writing another and a *better* letter to thy mother."

"I should be ashamed to write such a one so soon after the other."

"No; it is of the *first* letter thou shouldst be ashamed, and not of the *second.* Come, write; I beg thee to write; for I tell thee, if thou dost not write, thou wilt live to repent it. Suppose thy mother——"

"Hush! do not say that again, and I will do any thing."

Warburton then threw himself on his feelings; blamed his own impetuosity, implored his mother's pardon for the offensive expressions in his last, and offered to come and see her whenever she would receive him. But the good old man could not prevail on him to name her husband, or to apologize to him. However, he had done more than he expected, and he tried to be satisfied. "And now," said he, "I do hope thou wilt have no reason to regret meeting with John Reynolds. But whither art thou going now?"

"I am going to a friend's house in the neighbourhood; and I shall come hither again the day after to-morrow to see for letters, and await here an answer to my letter of to-day."

"I shall return hither at the same time. Shall we dine together, all things permitting?"

"With all my heart; and believe me, dear sir, I can never forget your kind interest in a thoughtless young man like me."

"If thou wert only thoughtless, I should not have taken interest in thee; but I believed there was something in thee that was well worth the trouble of bringing out, and I was not deceived. I have probed thy heart, and I find it sound at the bottom. Farewell! we shall meet again, I trust."

They then went their separate ways; and at the appointed time they met again at the inn.

"Well," said Mr. Reynolds, "hast thou any thing new to tell me?"

"No; the post is not in yet. But I can't, I find, have an answer to my last letter to-day, though my mother is only five and twenty miles off; as there is no cross post, the letter must go to London."

"That is a pity, as I should like to have known what her answer was."

The post now came in, and a letter was brought to Warburton. "It is that horrid fellow's ugly hand," said he throwing it down; "and what can he have to say to me? Why does not my mother write herself? I can't bear to open it."

"Let me see the address. An ugly hand! Thou art fastidious, friend Warburton; it is a very good hand. Perhaps thy mother is ill, and can't write. It must have been a very powerful reason, indeed, to make her allow her husband to degrade himself by writing to thee so soon after thy lowering expressions towards him. Pray open thy letter—I feel anxious."

"And you have made me so."

He opened the letter and read as follows:

"Mr. Frank Warburton—Sir,

"I am desired by my dear wife, who has been very ill ever since the receipt of your *terrible* letter (her own word,) to tell you that she thinks she is dying; and, therefore, she conjures you to let her see you as soon as possible; as, though you and your brother (to whom I also write) have cast off your living mother, she is sure you will forgive a dying one; and she has something to impart to you. Be not afraid, sir, that I shall intrude myself into your presence; but I beg you will consider my house as yours as long as you please.

"B. B."

Warburton had not read further than the third line, before he had rung the bell almost off, and desired a post-chaise and four to be got ready directly; and then gave way to such a violent paroxysm of feeling, that Mr. Reynolds, used only to live with persons of subdued emotions, feared his reason was affected.

"O Sir! read that," said he, "and be assured that I shall always bless your name. Had I not written to her before I received this, I should have been really distracted."

Reynolds read the letter, and with much emotion. He too then rang the bell; and casting a look of great pity on his agitated companion, he desired the waiter to put a pair of posters to his horses, which were quite fresh, and that would save time.

"I will not, nay I cannot let thee go alone, with thy mind in this state; I am the father of sons, and I know how I should have wished another to behave to a son of mine under such circumstances; so, though thou art a stranger to me, I will be thy companion."

"O sir, you are too good."

"Dear me, dear me—what with thy ohs and ahs, and thy exaggerated expressions, thou art really a trial, poor child, to my patience. But I can't help liking thee notwithstanding, especially as in all thy violence thou never yet hast taken the great name in vain. Besides, I recollect thou art very young—not a man yet in the eye of the law, thou knowest."

"But I am old enough, sir, to value you as you deserve, and to value also your admonitions; and I will profit by them *if I can*."

"That '*if I can*' pleases me far more than a positive assurance of thy hope to profit by them would have done, as it shows *self-knowledge* and *self-distrust*."

The chariot now came round, with post-horses added to Mr. Reynolds's own young and vigorous horses, and the travellers set off. On the road Mr. Reynolds beguiled the time, and tried to divert Warburton's attention from himself, by asking him details of his family, pursuits, and prospects in life; from which he learnt that he was well born, would have a handsome fortune when of age, and that his mother had been only tender and too indulgent.

"Ay, so indulgent that she spoiled thee; and so the order of nature was reversed, and she became subservient to *thee*, and not thou to *her*. Poor thing! It is a good proverb — that slaves make tyrants, and not tyrants slaves. Had she properly corrected thee when thou wert young, thou wouldst not have dared thus to reprove and treat her with indignity now she is old. What a pity it is, that mothers will not remember, that though it is sweet to

be beloved, love itself is in danger of being worn away, except it is fenced round by well-merited respect."

"Well, sir, my mother might be weakly indulgent; but I assure you she has noble qualities; though I own that maternal affection has been in her too much of a passion perhaps."

"A *passion!* it had better have been a *principle;* for I see it has ended in mischief and misery, as all passions do."

They were now approaching the abode of Mrs. Blackmore, and Warburton's emotions became almost uncontrollable.

"If I should come too late! if—"

"Still, remember thy last letter has been received, and it would serve to heal her wounded spirit."

"Her wounded spirit! Yes — yes — her wounded spirit; — but who wounded it? — Wretch! Parricide! Oh!"

"Well, Frank, if thou hast any comfort in calling thyself names, I will not try to prevent thee; but thou art afflicting thyself too soon. And see, convince thine eyes, poor boy! we are driving up to the house; and indeed it does not look like the house of death."

The carriage stopped; — but Warburton could not prevail on himself to speak, or to alight, till his kind friend had gone in to ask a few questions. As the servant was long in coming, and the door stood open, the good man let himself out, and met the servant in the hall.

"Thy mistress is alive, I trust?"

"O yes, and better, sir. She thinks *herself* better."

"Since when?"

"Since yesterday, sir."

"Did she get a letter by the post?"

"Yes, sir; and she said, — 'This has done me such good!' and she has been better ever since."

Mr. Reynolds, who had quieted Warburton's fears by an encouraging nod, as soon as his first question had been so satisfactorily answered, now hastened to the carriage, drawing, as he did so, his hand across his eyes.

"Pshaw!" said he; "I believe thou hast infected me with thy weakness."

"Well, sir!"

"Well, wait a moment. Thy mother is better;—better, it seems, poor fond soul, since she received thy letter."

Here he paused, for Warburton's emotions were now contagious.

"Ah, we parents are sad, weak creatures, to have life and death thus seemingly dependent on the caprice of such shatter-brained folks as thou art. But do behave like a man for once—wipe thine eyes, and get out."

He then walked into the house; but Warburton sprung after him, and rushed into the left-hand parlour.

"Let thy mistress be told her son Frank is here."

"Now do, Frank, remember, when thou seest her, a sick woman has not my iron nerves; and even these thy violence has weakened a little."

The servant now returned to tell Warburton that Mrs. Blackmore wished to see him instantly.

"What a good thing," thought Mr. Reynolds, as he walked up and down the room, "it would have been for that impetuous youth to have been brought up amongst FRIENDS!"

In twenty minutes Warburton returned, but worse than when he went away. He oh'd and he ah'd more than ever. He sobbed, he walked up and down the room, and, "I shall never forgive myself!" was all that was intelligible.

"Dear, dear, what is the matter? Is thy mother worse?"

"Oh, no, better! Oh, I shall never forgive myself!"

"Really, dear boy, thou art quite unintelligible now. First thou couldst not forgive thyself because thou hadst made her ill; and now, thou canst not forgive thyself because thou hast made her well. Do explain."

"I cannot yet; only that she is the noblest of beings, and I the most ungrateful."

Here he elevated his arms, struck his forehead, and gave way to all that exuberance of feeling, to which persons untaught to subdue their passions, are apt to yield.

"Thou must excuse me, Frank, if I say, that, though I never saw a stage-player, I fancy thee to resemble one, for I have seen mummers on stages in a fair. A few tears may be pardoned, nay, approved; for we know WHO ONCE WEPT; but these contortions, my good Frank, do put a stop to; and by making only one effort to explain their cause to me, they will be at an end."

Here the door opened, and Mr. Blackmore entered; but started back and would have retired on seeing Warburton. Warburton, however, would not suffer him; for, springing forward, he seized his hand, grasped it to his heart, and with difficulty articulated, "O, sir, forgive me!"

Blackmore struggled to withdraw his hand, and said, with deep feeling, "Rash boy! I do forgive you, as you have not killed your mother." He then suddenly left the room.

"So that is thy father-in-law! I liked his letter to thee, but I do not approve his speech to thee; and I agree with thee in not liking his appearance much."

"O, sir, say nothing against him, for I can't bear it. He is the kindest and most generous of men!"

"He! what, that man whom it was a disgrace to thy mother to marry? Frank Warburton, canst thou be talking of the same man to-day whom thou wert talking of two days ago?"

Blackmore now entered again, to apologize

to Mr. Reynolds — whom kindness to his son-in-law had brought thither, he found — for not having been able to pay him proper attention; but that dinner was nearly ready, and he hoped he would do him the honour of partaking it.

"I shall do *myself* honour, if I sit down to table with 'the kindest and most generous of men,' as thy son-in-law calls thee."

"Does he? Then his tone is a little altered."

"It is; but as he is very apt to use bouncing, high-sounding epithets; and as he declares himself unable to explain, perhaps thou wilt, for, really, I am very impatient to know the right, and be able to reconcile contradictions."

"Yes, do explain, dear Mr. Blackmore," cried Frank; "it would be too trying for me to do it; and where you do not do yourself justice, I will."

"It is very disagreeable to talk of one's self; but if I must I must; and I must say, there is a great deal of fuss about nothing. You may know, sir, perhaps, that I owe every thing to the late Mr. Warburton. He educated me; he made me his clerk; he took me into his business, that of an American merchant; and when he left the business, I became the principal partner in the house. He died about three years ago; and while arranging his affairs, I had frequent opportunities of seeing and being with his widow; and though I never then thought of venturing to pay my addresses to her, I became strongly attached to her; and for the mother's sake I loved the children still more than I had ever done—and I had *always* loved them tenderly."

Here he paused in strong emotion, and Warburton grasped his hand, while Mr. Reynolds looked out of the window.

"Time went on. I continued to see Mrs. Warburton, and she could not but discover that attachment which was so visible to others; but she gave me no encouragement, and I remained silent. Things were in this state when I heard a most painful piece of news. Mr. Warburton had placed his sons' fortune in the hands of —— and Co. much against my advice, to receive so much per cent. till a favourable opportunity offered to buy into the funds; but when he died, I, as executor, wished to reclaim the money, as I preferred trusting public rather than private security; but I tried in vain to get it back; and this circumstance alarmed me; for surely, thought I, if these men can't pay back a deposit like this, they cannot be in a very good way; and the event proved I was right; for I was privately informed that in a few months, if not weeks, there would be a crash in that quarter. I, therefore, went to Mrs. Warburton with these documents; and as her jointure, though handsome for herself, would be very little when divided between her sons, she was overwhelmed with distress at this utter blight to their prospects, especially as she knew that their habits were expensive, and their ambition great."

"Well, friend Blackmore, go on. Why dost thou pause?"

"Because now I must talk of myself. Seeing her so distressed, I told her that as I owed all I had to her husband, all I had was at the disposal of his children; and that if she would suffer it, I would replace half the money out of my savings, which her sons would lose by the impending bankruptcy, and contrive to do it unknown to them; and to make up to them at my death the rest of their losses."

"And still not one word of thy love?"

"Not one;—it would have been very mean and very ungenerous to urge my suit at such a moment."

The good friend now rose from his chair, and taking Blackmore's hand, said, "I truly respect thee. But what said thy friend's widow?"

"She thanked me, and said all she ought to have said; but owned her pride revolted, and she knew her sons' pride would revolt, from owing such an obligation. In vain I urged and entreated; she was resolute; and I left her, resolving when I was gone to endeavour to disclose their ruined fortunes to her sons, then at college. But to be brief; I now saw an opening for my suit which I had not had before; so I wrote her word, that though as *Mrs. Warburton* she could not accept obligations from me either for herself or sons, yet there was a way to remove all obstacles; and then I pleaded my love."

"And successfully?"

"Yes; that is to say, she owned that she loved the memory of her husband too tenderly to love another man; and that she had resolved never to marry; but that she would make any sacrifice for the sake of her children; and that she would marry me, as I promised to consider her children as mine; and we were married privately about ten days ago. But delicacy towards me made her resolve to hide even from *them* the *motives* of her marriage. Nor would she ever have told them — though when she announced it to them, Frank wrote that letter — had she not believed herself on her death-bed; and then to quiet her poor mind, I *urged* her to reveal them, to justify herself in the eyes of her rashly judging children. I have no more to tell. The rest you know, except that the bankruptcy of ——— and Co. is in the paper to-day, and that it is feared they will not pay five shillings in the pound."

"Friend Blackmore," said Mr. Reynolds, "give me thy hand again; I do not tell thee, like my friend Frank here, that thou art 'the most kind and generous of men,' because there may be many such in the world; but I do tell thee that I am glad to have seen thee and known thee, and that, but for private reasons of my own, I would cultivate the acquaintance of thee and thy family."

"And will you not do so, sir?" said Blackmore; "shall we not see you here again?"

"I do not say that exactly."

"Oh, dear sir, my kind friend and monitor, do you really mean to say that our acquaintance is to end here?" exclaimed Warburton.

"See! there he is again with his oh's and his violence. Listen, Frank, I will be very honest with thee;—I have a daughter; and as she is of the Society of Friends, and I wish her to remain so, I do not choose to expose her to the risk of becoming attached *out* of the Society; and thou really art a fine young man, Frank; and as the father cannot help liking thee, I am wisely afraid that the daughter might like thee still *better*, and *too well*, and *thou her*. Therefore, till Rachel Reynolds becomes Rachel somebody else, or thou art thyself a husband, we will correspond occasionally, if thou wishest it; but not be visiting acquaintances at each other's houses; for it is a maxim with me, that parents should never expose their children to the risk of forming attachments which, when formed, they must in conscience disapprove. And now thou knowest the truth."

"A truth flattering, yet painful, to me, sir; but I hope Rachel Reynolds will soon be no more, and then we may meet."

"But, sir," said Blackmore, "*you* may occasionally visit us."

"True; and I will come some day, perhaps, to see thy wife when she gets well again. But now I must prepare to go, as I have a long journey to take. But see, who have we here?"

A post-chaise, with four horses covered with foam, now stopped at the door, and a young man, jumping out of it, ran into the hall, exclaiming to the servant, "Am I too late? Is she alive!" Then, on hearing the reply, he uttered, "Thank God!"—and almost staggered into the room; where Frank Warburton, nearly as much affected as his poor brother, led him to a chair.

Charles Warburton had not the gift of tears like his brother, and, therefore, probably he suffered more. "O Frank! what I have gone through since I received that terrible letter!" said he, looking fiercely at Blackmore, of whom he took no notice.

"You have much to hear," said Frank, who had observed the look; "therefore let me tell you in another room." Then taking his brother's arm, he said to Blackmore as he passed them, "Rely on it, dear sir, he will learn to feel towards you as I do." He then led his wondering and half-indignant brother into the garden.

"How necessary has been, and how salutary will be, the chastisement which these youths have received in the loss of their property!" said Mr. Reynolds; "their pride wanted humbling. What a look did that lad give *thee!*—Is aught composed of frail mortality justified in looking so at a *brother mortal!*"

"My good sir, both these brothers have their weaknesses, but they are really worthy lads on the whole; and remember, they are very young, and have been much indulged."

"It is kind in thee to remember it, however; and I feel assured that if they can but conquer their pride of heart—and really I do think poor Frank's is gone already—they will be the better for their late trial."

Before Blackmore could reply, Frank came in to say that his brother wished to see him alone. And the good Friend had the satisfaction of seeing Charles Warburton fly to meet his father-in-law with all the outward signs of reconciliation.

Mr. Reynolds' carriage now returned to the door, but waited till he had dined with Blackmore and Frank; Charles being still too much agitated to sit down to table, as he was expecting every moment a summons to his mother.

"I must go now, indeed," said Mr. Reynolds, reluctantly rising; "but I trust that some day or other we shall meet again in peace and love. Farewell, friend Blackmore; and farewell, dear Frank! and remember, that if thou ever needest a friend, thou wilt find one in me. But I will write to thee—and once more farewell."

He departed; and Warburton looked after the carriage with a grateful heart and a tearful eye.

Some letters did pass between them; monitory and affectionate on one side, and respectful, grateful, and confidential on the other.

But both the young men were of age before they saw Mr. Reynolds again; and then he called on them unexpectedly one day at their house in ———, where Blackmore's business was carried on. He was accompanied by his daughter and her husband.

"Well," said he, "as Rachel is married, I am come to see you all; and I have brought her and her husband with me."

Blackmore, his wife and the two sons, were present when they arrived; and their guests received the welcome which they deserved.

"Oh! I see, sir," said Frank aside to Mr. Reynolds, "that it was for me you feared, and not for your daughter. How beautiful she is!"

"There, there! say comely," he replied; "but indeed I feared for both."

"Well; how goes on business, Frank?"

"Admirably."

Charles and Frank had very properly refused to accept, even from their mother's husband, so considerable a pecuniary donation; but, as their fortunes were much diminished, they wisely resolved to become men of business, and they accepted Blackmore's offer of a share in his. Nor was it unworthily bestowed; for, improved by adversity, and excited to emulation by the conduct and example of their father-in-law, they were remarkable not only for their attention to business, but for their

skill in it, and for the great prosperity which attended their undertakings.

"Well, all I hear of you, young men, pleases me," said Mr. Reynolds; "and thou art, I trust, friend Emma Blackmore, a happy mother."

"I am indeed; and, believe me, I shall never forget that I owe the first step to my recovery from illness and misery (as my son tells me) to your kind admonitions to him, sir."

"Not so, I trust; had there not been materials to work with, I could not have worked, thou knowest; and I believe all the service I did was bringing his heart round sooner than it would have otherwise come. Now my next wish is to see thy sons married and settled. Frank smiles and looks knowing; is there any thing of the sort going forward?"

"Yes, sir; your history of yourself was not lost on me, in any way, I trust, nor on my brother; for, as you married one of your father-in-law's daughters, we contrived to fall in love with our father-in-law's nieces; from whose fortunes, at his death, that generous man was willing to take one-half, for our sakes; and as he and my mother are now not present, I will add, that they are well connected on the mother's side, and, having been educated by her relations, are highly accomplished."

"I shall not take what they are on thy word, Frank, but judge for myself; and I invite you to pass part of the honeymoon at my house. How truly do I rejoice to see you all once more a family of love!—For widely indeed do we wander from the right path, and the path of happiness, even here, when we give way to the bitterness of resentment, and forget the newest and most alluring of all the commandments—'THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER.'"

A TALE OF TRIALS;

TOLD TO MY CHILDREN.

INTRODUCTION.

I WAS dining some years ago at the house of a country gentleman, whose ancestors, male and female, ornamented the walls around me. Some of them were painted by Van Dyck, Lely, and Kneller; and as I love to look at portraits, I took every opportunity of gazing on them. But my attention was at length forcibly attracted, and as powerfully arrested, by the countenance of a lady amongst them in the costume of Charles the Second's days; though the picture was evidently not painted by the same hand which immortalized his beauties at Hampton Court.

But I discerned a difference in the dress of this lady, which I thought an improvement on that of the times, as

> "A modest stole of cypress lawn
> Was o'er her decent shoulders thrown;"

and hanging below the rows of white beads which encircled her beautiful throat, was a large ruby cross.

I could describe her dress, if I chose it, with tedious minuteness; I could also, perhaps, give an idea of the faultless regularity of her features; while the epithet *pearly* might convey to the eye the soft transparent white of her complexion; but her countenance cannot be described—suffice that I found it nearly impossible to divert my eyes from those expressive ones which seemed fixed on mine; and that I soon perceived my host, who was nearly a stranger to me, observe the fascination which I was under, with pleasure and interest.

At length I resolved to ask the name of this interesting creature; but it was in fear, lest I should be forced to forego my enthusiastic admiration by the mortifying assurance that this lady, who certainly looked as if she was *somebody*, had been one of the beauties most admired in Charles's licentious court; and I wished to believe her a being too pure to have breathed so unholy an air. But my fears were vain; for though I heard she was a lady of rank, the name was unknown to me; and I found she had enjoyed no *unbecoming* distinction.

Meanwhile my host continued to regard me with a very meaning countenance; and the more so as he observed that, even to the last moment of our remaining in the dinner-room, my eyes were attracted to this picture; and that while waiting to be led to the carriage in the evening, I stole into the dining-parlour, which opened near the hall-door, to gaze on my favourite again.

But he did not notice my *engouement*, otherwise than by a kind smile, till he handed me into the carriage. He then said, "We shall meet again soon, I hope; for your friends are coming hither to spend a day or two, and they have promised to try to bring you with them—Will you come? I think you will, for that picture will attract you hither; and the original of that picture I will then introduce to your acquaintance."

"The original of that picture!" cried I; "pray explain."

"Not now; come hither again, and I will."

So bribed, I could not refuse; and at some inconvenience to myself, I accompanied my friends on their visit.

Not long after our arrival, my host took me into a room which he called his study, where hung a whole-length picture of the same lady, in a dress resembling that of a nun. But I will not anticipate by describing her accompaniments, and the back-ground of the painting, which was what is called an *historical*

portrait. I also saw hanging on one side of her a whole-length picture of a very handsome elderly man; and on the other side as handsome a young man; while over the door was a head of an ordinary-looking man, in the dress of a common mechanic.

"All these pictures," said my host, "are illustrative of an event in the life of that lady, with whose countenance you are so strongly fascinated; and the excessive interest she has excited in you, has determined me to intrust into your hands a manuscript relation of the remarkable events of her life, written by herself. They appear to me worthy of being disclosed to the world; though I have hitherto complied with the desire of my parents, (her great-grandchildren,) and shown the manuscript only to very particular friends. But if you think that this little narrative could be published with effect, and with probable advantage to others, I wish it to be made public; provided that you promise to alter every name in the story, and give no clue to the world to discover who were the real actors in the scenes in question."

With these conditions I promised to comply; and with great eagerness I sat down to peruse the manuscript intrusted to me, especially as my host told me, he had another picture of the lady to show me when I had read it.

A perusal of it increased my admiration of that being whose countenance still lived, and still shone so brightly on the speaking canvass. And I venture to give her story to the world, and in her own words too; not without hope that others may be led by the perusal to feel a degree of that interest in it which I experienced myself.

"I WAS born in the year 1642, and I need not tell those whom I address that I am of an ancient family; nor that, as a child of a younger brother, and the eldest of seven children, my prospects of fortune were for many years of my life inferior to the advantages of my birth.

"It is equally needless for me to inform them that I saw the light just as the discontents in England were ripening into a civil war.

"But it may be necessary for me to explain even to those who know my father's political opinions, and how devotedly attached he always was to what are now called Whig principles, why, on the expected execution of his sovereign in the year 1649, (seven years after my birth,) he left England in disgust, and joined his elder brother, a determined loyalist, on the pleasant banks of the Durance.

"It was because my father, though he fully admitted the right of the parliament to depose the king, could not approve the vote for his execution, and not from the influence of personal attachment counteracting the power of principle, but from a deep-rooted opinion which he entertained that allowances should always be made for a being born for sovereign sway, and consequently to the extraordinary temptations and disadvantages inseparable from the situation. He therefore thought that the indulgence due to those errors, the result of a rank in life to which the culprit did not *call himself*, should have led the unhappy monarch's judges to have changed his sentence from death into banishment.

"These sentiments were, unconsciously to himself, encouraged in my father by the quiet, unfelt, but sure influence of my beloved mother; who—being a Provençale by the maternal side, a catholic, and the younger daughter of a Scotch baron, had ideas of the divine right of kings, and of the sacredness of their persons, which even her love for her husband and respect for his opinions could not in any strong degree subdue. Gladly then did she listen to my father's eloquence, when he talked of the *cruel sentence* of the king; while he, delighted to be able to agree with her in one of her political opinions, and gratified by the consciousness of giving pleasure to the woman whom he adored, was continually expressing his disgust at the approaching end of the monarch on the scaffold, till he worked up her feelings and his own to such a pitch of generous indignation on his side, and of loyalty on hers, that he turned indignant from the apparent approach of republican rules, and hastened with his family to take up his future residence in Provence.

"But in this act of self-banishment from his native land, inspired by generous pity rather than loyal feeling, evaporated all my father's respect to his monarch, and to the cause of loyalty; and never again did his beloved wife and he sympathise in any political feeling; for, from the banks of the Durance, and from a country of political despotism, he turned many a longing and admiring look towards the banks of the Thames; and hailed with enthusiasm the power, and the rising fame of the Commonwealth of England.

"He was, however, quite happy in the bosom of his family, and peculiarly alive to the beauty of the scenery around us. My mother had a great passion for gardens, and she was particularly fond of the cultivation of flowers. Our garden, therefore, was really an orange grove, and our grapes rivalled those of the Hesperides. But orange-trees, and grapes were, in profusion, natives of Provence; and in them my mother had only to cultivate the spontaneous produce of nature. But she sighed to obtain also such ornaments for her parterre as art alone could procure her;—and jonquilles and other flowers cultivated for the peculiar gratification of the French monarch, the luxurious Louis XIV., were soon obtained for her by my rich and kind uncle; till our house was literally embosomed in fragrance.

"Alas! she had herself the sweetness and the fading beauty of the fair creations which she cherished; for I had scarcely reached the age of seventeen, when consumption, as usual, clothed in the bright tints of still increasing beauty, removed this spotless being to another state of existence, and bequeathed to me the task of consoling my almost frenzied parent under her loss; and of trying to be a mother to the children whom she had left.

"It is painful indeed to me to recall the excessive suffering of my bereaved father during the ensuing year. But another lamentable event roused him at length from his stupor, for the sake of his family. My uncle, my father's elder brother, with whom we resided, survived my mother only a year and a half; and as my father was his heir, and as the property which he left in England was considerable, both in estates and money, it was judged requisite that my father should go to England to take possession.

"Hope also whispered to him that he might derive balm to his wounded spirit from an entire change of scene; he therefore eagerly resolved to leave that paradise, now become a desert in his eyes; while I reluctantly undertook to prepare for our departure. Not that I did not welcome the idea of any change likely to restore my father to health of mind; but my affections were engaged to a youth who was a year, or two older than myself, whose mother was a relation of *my* mother's, and who lived in Provence with his maternal grandmother, as his father, one of the most devoted of loyalists, had sent his son from Scotland, his native land, that he might be safe from all the perils attendant on civil wars.

"His father was now dead, and those wars were at an end; and Delaval was preparing to return to Scotland, to take possession of his patrimony, when he was detained in France by the illness of his grandmother; and was unable, as he intended, to accompany us to England. This was indeed a trial to us both, as we had never been separated for many years, and were looking forward to an immediate union, when we reached my native country.

"We regretted this separation the more, because my father (who, though he loved Delaval, disliked both his politics and his religion,) wished me to marry a protestant and a man of his own political principles; and my lover, though moderate in his opinions, and far from a bigot to his creed, was a loyalist and a catholic. But to me — who, as well as my sisters, had been educated in my mother's religion, and was rather inclined to her feelings of attachment to the Stuarts — my lover's opinions were an additional recommendation of him; and I, like Delaval, was fearful lest my father, who had always given a reluctant consent to our marriage, should be induced to oppose it, if I had an opportunity of marrying in England more to his satisfaction.

"But to part was at that moment unavoidable, as Delaval could not leave the lingering death-bed of his tender relation; and with an agonizing heart I bade my last adieu to the lamented dead, and to the as tenderly beloved living. Yes, it was by the tomb of my mother that I bade my lover farewell; and before her tomb I renewed my vows of eternal constancy to that lover whose attachment had been hallowed to me by her warmest approbation.

"We left France in the year 1660 — the year of the Restoration; and when we reached England and its busy metropolis, we found it a scene of revelry and delight; at least such was the appearance which it exhibited in the circles in which we moved; for every trace of republican and fanatical gloom had vanished, and public and private feasts and rejoicings bespoke the general satisfaction which the restoration of the king had given. London seemed like a widow, who, having been constrained to wear sombre black longer than suited her natural inclination, had, on throwing it off, eagerly clothed herself in every variety of gay and gaudy colours, delighting in entire and striking contrast of ornament.

"But my father beheld this gaiety approaching dissoluteness, and this courtly splendour succeeding to republican simplicity, with a suspicious and a jealous eye. He loved not such extremes; and finding that certain conditions, on which alone he had hoped the king had been restored, had not even been hinted at, before this important step was taken; finding also that the court of Charles the Second was not a scene in which it was desirable for his daughters to move, he resolved, after he had been presented at court himself, to retire into a beautiful valley in Cumberland, where my uncle had possessed an estate; and to devote himself, in absolute retirement, to the education (assisted by a Cambridge scholar) of my young brother.

"How I rejoiced in this resolution of my father's! Because to me the world had no charm, nor indeed any scene where Delaval was not; but in retirement I knew that I should be living for him, if not with him; and that no other object would be likely to come between me and the object of my affection. Still my father would have proved his mind to be in a more healthy condition, had he resolved to go at once to his paternal estate in Surrey, which was ready for our reception, and where it was now fitting that he should reside.

"But to Cumberland we removed. And my father found, that, though many beauties of nature surrounded our habitation, the aid of art was necessary to make it comfortable. Rocks and mountains closed us in on every side, and through our lawn glided the silvery Derwent, while the murmurs of natural waterfalls saluted the ear of the wanderer; and

those falls, after a few hours of rain, glittered through the trees in the sublimity of mountain torrents. But then few were the flowers that bloomed around us, and not very plentiful or excellent was our fruit; and my father resolved, by expending a considerable sum in hot-houses, and in importing fruits and flowers from the continent, to make our English residence resemble, as much as possible, the villa on the banks of the Durance.

"I considered this expensive design as a proof of the restlessness of his mind; but I did not regret its being put in execution, because it gave him occupation, led him to take exercise, and to be much in the open air, and, therefore, did him good; though I could not but perceive, that, while putting his plan in execution, he missed the classic judgment and the tasteful skill of her whom he had lost; and often, with tears in his eyes, he has asked me, when he had given his orders to the gardeners, whether I thought SHE would have approved of what he had done.

"At length his improvements were finished; and Derwent Dale, as our residence was called, became a bower of sweets, rivalling our French dwelling; while one blooming boy and two as blooming girls, besides myself, gambolled over the smiling lawn, or climbed the frowning rock, and forced my father to look from the painful past to the fair smiling future, forced him to forego his melancholy contemplation of the wife whom he had lost, in delightful anticipation of the comfort which he should derive from the children who remained to him.

"But faster than the mists flit away from the brow of the mountain, and scarcely less fast than the torrent descends from the brow of the rock, fled these delightful possessions from the grasp of my father.

"Their mother's malady beamed brightly from the dark eyes of all these precious children, and bloomed on their youthful cheeks; and soon, only too soon, the dark and solemn train of their successive funerals, wound along that smiling lawn so lately joyous with their innocent gambols, and formed an overwhelming contrast with the bright and vivid colouring of our house and our gardens.

"A contrast soon insupportable; for we were now only two solitary, silent, sighing, beings, where once the gay and piercing accents of sportive childhood had echoed round our dwelling, and in the valley. While nature and art seemed laughing around us in all the varied hues of summer, my father and myself, robed in the sable garb of death and woe, stalked over the beauteous scene, unconscious of its charms or its fragrance; and, like the statues that adorned the walks, were as incapable of tasting their loveliness, and as unmoved by it, as those marbles shining amongst it.

"'This is not to be borne, Adelaide,' said my father to me, at last; 'I cannot stay here, and we must remove into Surrey.'

"To Surrey we went; and glad indeed were we to leave the spot which for ever reminded us what treasures we had once possessed—and possessed no more; for in losing her dear children, we seemed to lose their mother over again; and as my father now feared that the air of the north had been too cold for those tender beings, he became doubly watchful over me, and anxious for my safety. But his anxiety was happily vain, as, with the complexion and hazel eyes of my father, I also inherited his robust constitution.

"The seat to which we were now going was the place of my father's birth. When we reached the venerable portal, and passed through a line of servants clothed in deep mourning, and showing by their countenances that they well remembered on what sad occasion they had been desired to assume that dress, my father's grief became incapable of control. Two of the servants had lived there ever since my uncle emigrated to France; the others had followed him thither; had returned with us to England; and had been sent from Cumberland by my father, to prepare every thing for his visiting the abode of his ancestors.

"Never had I seen my father more completely overwhelmed than he was that evening; and he retired to his room as soon as we arrived. This I expected, and rejoiced at, as he was always better for the excessive indulgence of his feelings; and his mind, as usual, rebounded from the strong pressure of agony to comparative cheerfulness; for, when he appeared the next morning at breakfast, I found him eagerly entering into plans for improving his estate, and new-furnishing the house; and he was very anxious to know whether he was likely to find agreeable neighbours in the gentlemen and the families around us.

"My father seemed pleased, too, to recollect that we were only twenty miles from London; and I saw that, though he chose retirement for the medicine of his grief for the loss of my mother, he was resolved to try to banish his present sorrow by company and amusements.

"He did not, however, find it an easy task to make neighbours and friends of the gentlemen whose estates joined ours; for, presuming on his avowed disapprobation of the death of the late king, which disapprobation was so strong as to drive him from his country, he thought himself privileged to be occasionally as disloyal in his expressions concerning his living king as he chose. And as our neighbours were chiefly Tories, whose conversation and sentiments were as disagreeable to my father as his could be to them, visiting intercourse was no sooner begun, than it was insensibly dropped again; and if they thought Mr. Falkland a dangerous and disaffected man, he, on his side, had little doubt that it was not safe to speak in such company. This impres-

sion increased my father's aversion to Tories, and I had the misery of seeing, when Delaval, on the death of his relation, hastened to England, and took up his abode near us, that my father's dislike to him, as his son-in-law, was heightened by the consciousness that he was of the same sentiments as his offending neighbours; and that he thought it very hard the only child now left him, should be bent on forming a union which he could on no ground whatever approve; — for I was become a considerable heiress, and Delaval was a man of very small landed property. However, at present, my father behaved to him with tolerable kindness; and though he forbade us to think of marriage, while the term of our mourning was unexpired, we felt that prohibition too just, to look on it as an omen of ultimate disappointment.

"But we had more to prognosticate of evil from my father's frequent sneers at our religious belief. Both Delaval and I were at this time seriously studying the evidences for and against our creed. But the moment Delaval fancied it possible that his interest might be unconsciously influencing his convictions, and that the wish to conciliate my father might be the origin of his lately awakened doubts, his scrupulous integrity made him, as it were, retrace his steps; and he clung more closely to the belief which before he was on the point of abandoning.

"It was the same with me. The moment that I felt my faith an object of ridicule, and that the laugh, which it is so difficult to withstand, was directed against me with a view to induce me to abjure my opinions, self-distrust took possession of my mind, and I trembled lest I mistook fear of man for the convictions of conscience. At these times, both Delaval and myself used to perform the rites of our own church in the little chapel which my uncle, himself a Catholic, had fitted up in his garden, with more than usual feeling; and the amiable priest who officiated at the altar there, never had the satisfaction of beholding in us such devout worshippers, as after my well-meaning, but in that instance, injudicious parent, had made a recent attack on the folly of our belief. How much did this remind me of the fable of the Traveller and his Cloak!

"The priest whom I have just mentioned, was also an obstacle to any religious change in me. He had been my mother's confessor in her early youth, having been domestic chaplain to her father. He had then become chaplain to my uncle; and when we went into France, in the year 1649, we found him still there, and still officiating at the altar; and his virtues, his unobtrusive piety, and his attachment to my mother, won so much on my father's affections, that when we returned to England, he could not bear to leave the good old man behind, though he was then more than eighty. Nor, in his presence, did he ever, in the slightest degree, reflect on the Catholic religion; and as he was every day apparently near the close of his blameless life, I, as well as Delaval, shrunk from wounding, by our recantation, a heart that loved us.

"In the meanwhile my father, being disappointed of neighbours in the country, invited guests from London; and the repose of our new abode, which both Delaval and myself so highly valued, was only too often destroyed.

"To me the society of my lover and my father was sufficient for my happiness. I not only loved my much-tried parent because such was his relationship to me, but I was proud of his talents and his virtues, and I hung with eager and desiring ear on every display of his uncommon eloquence; though, I must own, that when his eloquence was displayed on political subjects, I trembled lest what he said should be repeated to persons in power, and that he should make himself liable to suffer from the arm of authority. Indeed, I have never known a more accomplished person than my beloved parent.

"In beauty of form and face he had few, if any competitors. He had a greater command and choice of words than any one with whom I ever conversed, and his mind was stored with elegant as well as useful learning.

"He was a considerable proficient in the scientific part of music, and an excellent judge of the practical; and he was one of the best swordsmen of his time.

"But, alas! grief had a visible effect on this usually active man, and powerful mind; and, as I before observed, Delaval and I soon saw how much that mind was unhinged, by the comparatively frivolous pursuits in which he tried to lose his sense of unhappiness.

"My father was resigned in one sense of the word, because he was a Christian, and could in sincerity of heart repeat, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' But he was not enough of a practical Christian to endure in unresisting silence and calmness the privations which had befallen him. Hence a constant restlessness, a constant want of excitement, led him to squander money in building, planting, making shrubberies and hot-houses, and in filling his house with very expensive guests. It was indeed a respectable sort of dram-drinking; still it was a species of intoxication; and Delaval and I could only reconcile ourselves to its mischievous effect, both on my father's character and his fortune, by reflecting that the misery of his mind might have taken another turn, and led him in its diseased state to more dangerous remedies—for he might have really drunk, and he might have gamed.

"'There is one remedy, dear Adelaide,' said Delaval smiling, 'which he may yet take, and which, for selfish reasons, I should much prefer.'

"'What is that?'

"'He may fall in love, and marry!'

"'And can you,' replied I indignantly, 'who

loved and revered my incomparable mother, wish her husband to marry again?'

"'Yes, if he gave her a proper successor; for then I might hope to call you mine, Adelaide, with absolute certainty. You would no longer be an heiress, as your father would probably have other children; and with the independent fortune which is yours in right of your mother, and my little property, we should not indeed be very rich, but we might be very happy, and on the banks of the Durance, where we first learnt to love, dearest girl!'—

"'On the banks of the Durance! Would you then wish us to leave England, and live separated, perhaps for ever, from my father?'

"'Yes; but not till you were no longer necessary to his happiness;—not till he had a wife and children, Adelaide.'

"'And can the time come,' said I, bursting into tears, 'when I can be no longer necessary to his happiness! He who is so kind, so fond, so good a parent!'

"Nor could the proof which Delaval had just given me of disinterested love, remove the sense of pain by a sense of pleasure. Delaval, who had raised the storm, could alone allay it; and to do him justice, there was no soothing that the most tender affection could suggest, which he did not exert to calm my wounded feelings. And he at length succeeded; but with his presence vanished my recovered composure; and when I retired for the night, I felt as if about to be bereaved of my dearest right and possession—my father's exclusive love. But as I loved another, why should not he? And I was at last forced to come to this conclusion; as I was amply provided for, and his marrying would not cast me forth to seek a home or a maintenance, I had no right to repine at his forming a second connexion, provided that it was one worthy of him; while the thought that such an event would ensure my immediate union with Delaval, reconciled me at length to the probability which had at first so cruelly overwhelmed me.

"It was now the year 1662; and we heard that preparations were making in the metropolis to receive the queen-mother, Henrietta Maria, who, accompanied by the Earl of St. Albans and others, was coming over on a visit to her son.

"I listened to this apparently unimportant news to me with perfect composure; and no beating of my heart, no trembling of my limbs, as if in warning and foreboding, blanched my glowing cheek, and suffused my eyes with tears! Then there can indeed be no such thing as presentiment; else the tidings of this arrival, so big with fate to me, could not have been heard by me without overwhelming emotion!

"The queen-mother at length reached London; and in her train *seemingly* came a Madame du Vernis, her daughter, and her brother the Marquis de Merinville. These persons brought letters of recommendation to my father from an English friend of ours, who had known them abroad, and received civilities from the marquis; which civilities, alas! he thought he could not repay better than by giving the travellers an introduction to my father and myself.

"The letter to my father announcing the letter of introduction, which we had not yet received, was filled with praises of the beauty, grace, and accomplishments of the mother and the daughter. Monsieur du Vernis was not of the party, it also stated, because he had an office about the court which did not allow of his absence.

"I was struck with the expression of pleasure which overspread my father's countenance when he read this letter, and at the satisfaction with which he desired me to get the best apartments ready for these foreign guests;—'For,' said he, 'Adelaide, I shall invite them hither directly. And,' added he, after a pause, 'I think that the civilest way will be to go to London myself, and bring them down with me.'

"'Must I go with you, sir?' said I.

"'No, that is not necessary; but I wish Delaval to accompany me, as you are here without a *chaperone*, Adelaide; and I mean to return with my guests immediately, if I can.'

"When Delaval and I were alone together, I thought he wore a pensive air; and on asking him the cause, he replied, 'In the first place, I do not like leaving you;—in the next, I do not like the idea of these foreigners coming hither. Your father's friend, who recommends them, is, I know, a thoughtless man; I must venture to say, that I think your father equally thoughtless in inviting persons of whom he knows nothing, to be residents at his house, and under the same roof with his daughter. Poor man! I see that he catches eagerly at any thing that may divert his mind from his trials. But sure am I, that if that mind had not lost a little of its original delicacy and discrimination, by the destroying touch of suffering, he would not have so immediately decided to offer French persons, though of quality, a residence under his own roof in these perilous times.'

"I agreed entirely with what Delaval said, and listened to him with much painful foreboding, assuring him that I should anxiously expect to receive his opinion of our intended guests.

"The next day the letter of introduction arrived, inclosed in a most elegant one from Madame du Vernis; and my delighted father set off with Delaval, in his post-coach and four, the next day, to London. Oh, how eagerly did I expect a letter from Delaval! It came; but, alas! it told me nothing. My father did not ask him to accompany him in his visit to the ladies and Monsieur de Merinville; and he feared that he should not see

them at all till they were on the road into Surrey. 'Nor,' added he, 'shall I see much of them then, as I find that I am to ride down a new lady's horse which your father has just purchased for you.'

"It might be weakness, perhaps, but I was sorry to see my father set off in such a style for London, with a view to bring down these strangers in his own carriage and four; because I thought that, if they were not upright and honourable persons, they might be induced, by the appearance of opulence which he thus exhibited, into forming designs on him which otherwise they might not have thought of; as I knew that, in France, persons except of very high rank, did not travel in a style like that of my father. But I reproached myself immediately for what might be very unworthy suspicions, and tried to banish them from my mind.

"That day I received a letter from my father, saying that he should return the day after the next, and bring with him guests that a monarch even might be proud to entertain; —guests that he was most happy in being able to remove far from the corrupt air and detestable influence of the court of Charles Stuart.

"I was sitting in mournful contemplation over this characteristic letter, when the good old priest entered the room, who eagerly demanded when my father was to return, and who his expected guests were.

"I told him.

"'Are they catholics?' said he.

"'No doubt,' replied I, 'as they come in the train of the queen.'

"'*Bon!*' was his only answer, for that was nearly enough for him; and he withdrew contented. But not so did he leave me.

"My father's letter was short, but very expressive. His triumph, however, in bearing off these delightful guests from the contamination of the court, I could not understand; for I found it difficult to believe that, if they had been commanded into the court circle, they could have refused to go.

"Long and heavily passed the succeeding day. But on the morning of that on which I was to expect the party from London, I was agreeably surprised at finding Delaval in the breakfast-room when I came down; and though his countenance was evidently grave, I was alive, at first, only to the joy of seeing him. But the thoughtfulness of his air soon recalled me to the consciousness that he had something unpleasant to communicate; and I begged him not to keep me in suspense.

"'Though I rose very early,' said he, 'in order to get hither before them, I have little to say, except that I have seen this Frenchman and these French women, and that I do not like them.'

"'Indeed!'

"'That is—I do not approve them. I suspect that both the mother and daughter are as artful as they are beautiful; and that De Merinville, (who is very handsome, very clever, and very insinuating,) will be, O dearest Adelaide — Merinville will be very soon your declared lover!'

"'Well, if he be—what then?'

"'What then!—Your father may be induced, perhaps, to favour his suit;—not because he is, they say, a marquis of some property, and of a very ancient family in Britanny; but what will have more weight with your father, and make him still more hostile to me, is, that he professes himself to be come hither with a full intention of abjuring the errors of the catholic faith; and he also professes himself a foe to the despotism of his own country.'

"'Let him,' replied I tenderly; 'he will not thereby lead me to abjure my love for you, Delaval; nor will I ever marry without my own approbation, though I will never marry without my father's; therefore, if it be fear of my giving you up that makes you uneasy, I beg you to fear no longer.—But do describe the women to me.'

"'I cannot. Your father took me with him to call on them the morning after his first introduction; and though he absolutely raved about the beauty of both, and the grace of Madame du Vernis, I found he had scarcely done them justice. Madame du Vernis is so young-looking,' said he, 'that she seems like her daughter's elder sister. Her eyes are dark, bright, and penetrating—I might call them inquiring and examining eyes; — her features regular, and her mouth and teeth perfection. Her figure very tall and commanding, and her arms finely formed. But I think the greatest, the most dangerous charm of all, is her manner, which is at once graceful and dignified—full of self-respect, yet insinuating; and could one divest oneself, which I could never do, of her every look, gesture, and word, being the summit of art — I should think, that no disengaged man could resist her power, whom she was resolved to charm.'

"'Then you think you are safe, Delaval?'

"'Think I am safe, Adelaide? *Think* only that a man who loves you, and is beloved by you, can be in any danger from another woman, and that woman a *wife!*'

"'Well, well, you have however said enough,' replied I, 'about the mother; now go to the daughter, if you please.'

"'As far as appearances go, the girl, Adrienne, is very pretty and very *agaçante;* so much so, that till her mother gave her (unobserved as she thought) a very significant frown, her *agaceries* were addressed to me. But the young lady, who is quick at taking a hint, averted her eyes directly from my observing ones, and confined all their tenderness during the rest of the visit to your unconscious father.'

"'My father!'

"'Yes; rely on it that this is the game to

be played. But he is in no danger, for he considers all her attentions merely as those of a fond child; and there is a noble, unconscious simplicity in his manner of receiving her endearments, which it was gratifying to me to witness. Your father is yet too young to be in danger of being caught by a girl of fifteen; were he ten years older, he might be in danger perhaps. Still, come what come may, I wish Neville had not been weak enough to give them letters, and that your father had given himself time to know them all three before he invited them hither; for I think both the brother and the sister are calculated to gain ascendency over an artless, unsuspecting man like Mr. Falkland; and though I am sure his admiration of Madame du Vernis is now, and always will be, wholly free from any alloy of criminal passion—ascendency is ascendency, Adelaide; and while the artful brother flatters your father's passion for making converts, by drawing him into argument, in which he always is victorious, as the marquis admits—the sister entrances his very soul, by her consummate skill as a singer, and her performances on different musical instruments; and I repeat it, would they had never been introduced to Mr. Falkland!'

"The party arrived time enough for a late dinner; and I received them with a degree of trepidation which Delaval in vain endeavoured to check, and which was painfully increased by the stern glance that my father gave him, on entering, as if he disapproved his being with me before the rest arrived.

"I, therefore, performed the ceremony of welcome very ill. But it was impossible for Mr. Falkland's daughter not to please his adulatory guests; and I heard Madame du Vernis say to my father, 'You did not say too much; she is beautiful, graceful! Ah! you are a happy father, indeed!' Madame du Vernis spoke in English to my great surprise, and *well*, too; while the imperfection of her accent only seemed in her a grace the more; for never yet did my ears drink in so sweet and persuasive a voice. Delaval had not prepared me for this charm in her, one of the greatest charms possible in my estimation; and I must own, that before the first course was over, her beauty, her voice, her grace, and her flatteries, had such a magic power over me, that I became thoroughly enchanted by her; and though glad that Delaval thought of her as coldly and as ill as he declared himself to think, I was mortified to find him so deficient in taste. Adrienne, though very pretty, appeared to be insipid though artful, and too weak to be able to disguise her art; not so her mother. And believing from my confidence in Delaval's penetration, that those soft attractions which looked so like natural feeling in Madame du Vernis, were in reality as artificial as those of Adrienne, I could not help comparing them to an artificial rose, and rosebud. The rose is often so well done, that it is mistaken for nature; and the deception can only be discovered by the inferior formation of the bud. But for the daughter's being so evidently artificial, the mother might have passed for natural. But the rosebud, as I said before, detected the rose. Yet how unwillingly did I allow my judgment to correct the impulse of my feelings, and even of my taste! And while I gazed on this syren with admiring eyes, and listened to her melting accents with eager attention, my father regarded me with a look of marked approbation.

"Once, after looking at me for some time, she turned to my father, and said in a sort of whisper, '*Mais en verité c'est la ressemblance la plus parfaite que je n'ai jamais vue!*'* My father looked pleased, and said, 'Adele, Madame du Vernis thinks you are the very image of me.'

"'I am glad of it, sir,' replied I; 'I am proud of being reckoned like you.' And well I might; for my father, as I have before observed, was one of the handsomest men of his time.

"'What did you call Mademoiselle Falkland?' said Madame du Vernis, in rather a faltering voice. 'Adele. Her name is Adelaide, but I call her Adele because it is shorter.'

"'Adele,' echoed the lady; 'I hope in time to be permitted to call her Adele myself; for I once had a daughter, beautiful as she is, who bore that name!' Here she drew her hand across her eyes. 'Then, if it soothes you, dearest madam, call my daughter Adele your daughter Adele,' replied my father with sympathizing emotion. 'Thank you!' she answered; 'it would be happiness indeed,'—and she raised her eyes to his as she spoke,—'to be the mother, even in fancy, of your daughter!' I was not aware of the double meaning of this speech, nor my father; so the flattery was lost on him. But the truth was, that Madame du Vernis was wretchedly married; therefore, to be the mother of Mr. Falkland's daughter, *alias* his wife, would indeed be happiness to her; but I was deceived, and took the whole compliment to myself. De Merinville could not let this opportunity pass of paying me a compliment himself; and he exclaimed with affected feeling in his own language, 'You, Angelique, might think it a happiness to be the mother of Mademoiselle, but I should now feel it misery to be her uncle.' 'I see that already, my dear brother,' replied his sister, archly; and Delaval and myself exchanged looks of alarm at observing that my father seemed pleased by these speeches.

"But the little Adrienne now thought that she had been in the back-ground too long; she, therefore, rose, and coming round from the other side of the table to where my father sat, she made herself room on the corner of his

* But, indeed, it is the most perfect resemblance that I have ever seen.

chair; and while he fondly threw his arm round her, she held his hand to her side, as if to make the embrace closer; and then she looked up in his face with such an expression of tenderness—'Foolish child!' said my father. And the mother said softly, as if she was thinking aloud, and looking at Adrienne, '*Mais c'est une passion! absolument c'est une passion!*'* 'Nonsense!' said my father laughing, and wholly blind to what was going on. Delaval could not behold this scene of artifice, though it was utterly fruitless, without considerable indignation; and as, when unperceived by her mother and uncle, the young lady had made some tender advances to him, he determined to put a stop at present to her tutored attack, and prove to the brother and sister that he saw through their manœuvres. Drawing near Adrienne, therefore, he took her disengaged hand, and softly whispered that 'he could not bear to see her express such fondness for another man in his presence.' The bait took. As the fine lady in the fable re-became a cat at the sight of a mouse, so the young Adrienne forgot to make love to an elderly man as soon as a soft thing was said to her by a young one; and for a time nature prevailed over art. Adrienne forgot her instructions; and, gradually, as Delaval's looks became more tender, and the pressure of his hand more frequent, she got nearer and nearer to the edge of the chair, and further from my father, till she glided into a chair, next Delaval.

"Delaval had now gained his point—he had unmasked hypocrisy. But he had better not have done it; as I saw by the kindling eyes of the brother and the sister, that this little proof how well he understood their designs, made them Delaval's instant enemies; and it certainly stimulated them to get rid as soon as possible of so quick-sighted an observer.

"My narrative would extend to volumes, were I to describe the absolute sway which this most bewitching of women gained over my father. To be brief, I shall pass over two months of their residence, nor dwell on the various talents possessed by this uncommon woman, but proceed to that unhappy day when De Merinville first dared to profess for me an ardent attachment — dared, too, to add, that he had my father's sanction for addressing me. ''Tis false,' cried I, thrown off my guard by an assertion too agonizing for me to believe till I could doubt no longer; 'My father could not do so cruel and dishonourable a thing; for he knows that my affections and my hand have, even from earliest youth, been given to another with the warmest approbation of my beloved mother, now a saint in heaven — and without the disapprobation of my father himself!'

"'But even you do not believe, beautiful Adelaide,' he replied, 'that it was with your father's approbation; therefore, now that a man whom he is so kind as to approve solicits your hand, it is very natural that he should resolve to dismiss your other lover.'

"'Natural! natural!—that my father should wish to tear me from a man whom he knows, and has long known, and wish to give me to one of whom he knows nothing; a foreigner too, and the acquaintance of yesterday? No; spells and philters could alone account for such an infatuation.'

"'If spells and philters are so powerful, and have been exercised on him, would they could be exercised on you also, adorable Adelaide!' cried he; 'but never, never will I give up my hopes, and my pretensions—never will I cease to urge my suit.'

"'Never will I listen to it, however,' said I, attempting to leave the walk in which he had met and detained me. But seizing my hand, and grasping my gown so closely that I could not move, he fell on his knees, while I vainly struggled to free myself and escape. At this moment Delaval appeared in sight; and seeing my forcible detention, rushed towards De Merinville; and commanding him to desist from his violence, in an instant freed me from his unwelcome grasp, and received me faint and trembling in his arms.

"'You shall answer this impertinent interference to Monsieur Falkland, sir,' said the marquis, with the look of a fiend.

"'I would rather answer it to you, sir,' said Delaval.

"'He will tell you, sir,' said the marquis, 'that you have presumed to invade his rights —the right of disposing of his daughter.'

"'And I will tell him, sir, that he has invaded mine; that his daughter is my betrothed wife; and that nothing but an act of baseness and oppression can separate two beings engaged to each other by the tenderest ties, even before they knew the nature of the feeling which united them.'

"While this was passing, we were, though we knew it not, overheard by Angelique, who, immediately running to my father, with crocodile tears repeated all Delaval had said, and entreated him to hasten to the elm walk to prevent bloodshed; as Delaval, by accusing my father of '*baseness* and *tyranny*,' had so enraged her brother, that she did not know what the consequence might be; and, unfortunately, my father came while I, overcome with alarm for the future, and agony at the present, was still leaning on my lover's shoulder, for support. On seeing this, he flew towards us with an uplifted arm, and, but for the interference of Angelique, would, I believe, have struck the agitated Delaval; but she caught his arm ere it fell; and I, aware of what he felt, withdrew myself from Delaval's embrace. But it was to precipitate myself in

* But really it is a passion; absolutely it is quite a passion.

it again with all the frenzy of despair, when my father, with the look and manner of determined hostility, solemnly declared, that only on pain of his *malediction* should I ever be the wife of Delaval; and commanding him from his presence and mine, at that moment and for ever.

"Never shall I forget Delaval's look of woe at this moment. But he saw that opposition or remonstrance then would do harm rather than good, and he prepared to obey in silence. I, however, was not so judicious, but rushed impetuously into his arms; and as I held him, it seemed as if I meant that nothing but force should part us. But before that force had had time to exert itself—for even my father was awed by the wan despair of my countenance—I myself relinquished my frenzied grasp, uttering, as I did it, an almost inarticulate farewell—'Farewell!' repeated Delaval, 'my Adelaide; farewell, my wife!'

"'Yes,' replied I, summoning up all my energy, '*your* wife, or the wife of *no* one.'

"'Lead her away!' said my father to De Merinville, who approached to take my hand. On seeing which, Delaval sprung forward, and giving him a blow, at the same time snatching my hand from him, and striking the hilt of his sword, said in a low voice, 'You understand me, sir; I shall be in the neighbourhood;' and then instantly disappeared. While I, nearly sinking under this new alarm, was obliged to accept the arm of Angelique.

"'Mark me, Monsieur De Merinville,' said my father, 'I will have no fighting—no duelling about my daughter. Leave this hot-headed young man to live, and chew the bitter cud of repentance for his impertinence and violence. I shall consider it, sir, as a personal affront to me, if Miss Falkland's name be ever mentioned as the cause of quarrel or bloodshed between two impetuous young men.'

"'I shall obey you, sir, though unwillingly; but I beg you to believe, that I could not give you a stronger, because I could not give you a more trying proof of my respect both for you and Mademoiselle.'

"Still, my father, as well as myself, thought he only said this to quiet the apprehensions of us all; for my father, especially, found it impossible to believe that a gentleman of rank could so tamely submit to the indignity of a blow, and from a rival too, without resenting it; and I was of the same opinion; and having obtained leave to retire to my own room as soon as I reached the house, I passed the rest of the day in bed, vainly trying to tranquillize my terrors by prayer, and commending my endangered lover, as I thought him, to the protection of Heaven. I was, however, a little encouraged by seeing the composure of Madame du Vernis, who, with well-dissembled interest, came several times to my bed-side to inquire concerning my health; and lamented that the happiness of her brother, and of that interesting young man, Monsieur Delaval, were *incompatible*, as she must ever feel great interest in, and pity for, his hard fate.

"The next morning I rose early, and went in search of the butler, who had been an old attached servant in my mother's family, and who, I well knew, was an anxious and alarmed spectator of all that was going forward. My errand to him was to discover for me whether Delaval was still at the cottage at the park gate, which he had hired; and whether there had been any communication between the marquis and him.

"He did inquire; and the result of his inquiries was, that Delaval was still there, but that he and the marquis had had no communication either by word or letter. And after waiting three days, in vain, for a summons to meet the marquis, Delaval set off for London, sending me a note of adieu by the old butler.

"This note I was in the act of receiving as Angelique and Adrienne entered the hall in which we stood; and I have reason to believe that they informed my father of it; for not long after he called me to him, and desired to know whether Delaval had presumed to write to me since he had positively forbidden our union, and even our future intercourse.

"'He has ventured to write me a note of farewell,' replied I.

"'Let me see it!' said my father. And not unwillingly I gave it into his hand; as Delaval most feelingly lamented his having become so hateful in the eyes of my father, a man whom he must always revere, and all for the sake of one who had not even courage and love enough to risk his life for me, as he had not even spirit enough to avenge his own wounded honour. He then very pathetically alluded to my beloved mother; and declared that his regret, his disinterested regret for her death was so great, that he did not think any thing could ever have increased it; but that now he regretted more than ever the loss of that constant and consistent friend, as she had ever been to him, whose gentle and virtuous influence would now have been successfully exerted in his favour, and for the happiness of her only child.

"Having given this note to my father, I left him to give way unobserved, to the feelings it might occasion him. But alas! in vain; Angelique broke in upon him before he had quite finished reading it; and her presence counteracted all the good that might have resulted from it. Nor, as I afterwards found, were her comments wanting to increase the mischief of her presence; and when I returned to my father, he said to me with some sternness of manner, 'If, Miss Falkland, you keep up a correspondence with Mr. Delaval, my forbidding him to see you was wholly unavailing;—I therefore now, in express terms, forbid your correspondence. Who, madam, was the agent on this occasion?'

"'Manrell gave me the note, sir.'

"And my father rang for him.

"When he entered, my father sternly asked him, 'How he came to be the means of a correspondence so offensive to him?'

"'I do not consider myself as such, sir,' replied the old butler; 'and Mr. Delaval respects me and my duties too much, and so does Miss Falkland, sir, to require any such service of me. He told me the note, poor young gentleman! was to be his last; 'For, Manrell,' said he, 'I value you, and I know your principles too well, to wish you to violate your duty to one of the best of masters, by asking you to do what he disapproves; and this note he and all the world may see.'

"My father looked rather ashamed; but I saw a sneer on the face of Madame du Vernis, as she observed in French, 'that was speciously said by Monsieur Delaval; no wonder it imposed on the good old man.'

"'Speciously said!—Delaval speak speciously!—Delaval mean to impose on any one! And do you say this of *him*, before *me*, madam?' I exclaimed, my face on fire, and my eyes sparkling with indignation.

"Before she could reply, my father approached me, and in a lowered but distinct tone, said, 'Command yourself, Adele; nor presume to answer in such a tone, and with such looks, a lady whom I so highly regard, and a guest to whom every respect and hospitality are due.'

"'Then why, sir, did this lady presume to accuse the man I love and honour—the man my blessed mother taught me to love and honour—of meanness, which his noble nature is incapable of?'

'"Adele, you forget yourself—leave the room; your temper is sadly changed, child.'

"'Would that my temper, sir, were the only thing changed here!' replied I. 'Oh! my beloved mother, wert thou but living, Delaval would not have been banished from this house, and your poor child forbidden even to see him!'

"I saw that this mention of my mother's name had a softening effect on my father's feelings; but he endeavoured to hide it. He however returned me Delaval's note, saying, 'it was well and artfully written, and the young Tory knew what he was about. But he forgave it, as it was to be the last.'

"'Artfully written!' cried I; 'that observation is not your own, sir; it has been instilled into you.'

"'Leave the room this moment!' reiterated my father.

"Used to submission, and almost terrified at such an unusual exertion of spirit, I burst into tears of mingled anger and distress, and obeyed him in silence.

"Three days of gaiety and company from London succeeded to this; and we had a dance one evening, consisting of as many couple as my father could assemble; and I was forced to begin it with the odious marquis. My father, too, much to my annoyance, danced himself after supper with Madame du Vernis, and even with Adrienne.

"After the company was departed, and we were left to our family party again, that restraint which our guests had removed in some measure, most painfully returned; but my father was so completely absorbed in listening to Angelique when she sang or played, in hanging over her when she drew, or in accompanying her on my horse over the grounds, that I was allowed what I valued—the luxury of solitude; and whether in my room or in my walks, my reveries were as yet not interrupted. One day, as I was walking along a path which was only divided from the public road by a hedge, I was startled at a rustling in the branches; and instantly I saw a stone fall at my feet, round which was tied a piece of writing-paper.

"I could not doubt but that this was meant for me; and hastily untying it, I eagerly perused its contents. The hand was unknown to me; but I could not doubt that Delaval was the prompter of the communication. It assured me 'that Angelique and her brother were spies of the government; that my father had become suspected of disaffection, from his very unguarded and even ferocious mode of expressing himself concerning the king and his ministers; and that if he did not stop the communications of the brother and sister, by marrying Adrienne, there was little doubt but that my father's liberty might be in danger; that De Merinville was a marquis, and of old family; but had squandered his fortune in worthless pleasures, and had been forced to leave his country for a while, from being suspected of circulating false money; that Madame du Vernis was his sister, but only the natural child of his father; and that her history should be sent me when fully ascertained; and that then I should be desired to show it to my father.'

"I will not attempt to describe my feelings on reading this. Hope and fear struggled in my heart for mastery; but so sure was I of my father's even chivalrous devotion to Angelique, that I was convinced if my correspondent continued an anonymous one, he would treat all he said with abhorrence and contempt.

"Still, I could scarcely be easy in mind without imparting what I had already heard to my father. However, there was one person to whom I could communicate it, and that was the good old priest; who, though he had been charmed at first with the manners of the foreigners, and by the ladies' attendance at chapel, was soon distressed to witness my father's evident devotion to them, forgetfulness of others, and banishment of Delaval; and still more by their present remissness, and total neglect at last of the duties of the religion which they professed.

"The good old man wept tears of joy at the idea of their being at length unmasked; and I tried to be as sanguine as he was; but very advanced age is returned into the sanguine expectations of childhood; and early life, when it is no longer in the first bloom of budding youth, is acquiring fast the distrust of middle-age. The octagenarian was old enough to hope for what he wished — the girl of twenty was young enough to fear disappointment.

"Another week elapsed and I received no second letter, though I walked on the spot every day where I had received the first; and I was the more distressed and disappointed at not receiving it, because the odious marquis, knowing now where he was sure of finding me at a certain hour, contrived to join me in that walk every day, and persecute me with his detested addresses.

"At length I again heard a rustling in the hedge; and again a stone, covered as before, dropped at my feet. But just as I had begun to read the paper, the hated De Merinville, with a countenance full of sarcasm, seized my arm. I looked at him with indignant scorn, and continued to read.

"'And is this,' said he, with an air of sarcastic defiance, 'the way in which Mademoiselle Falkland obeys her father, carrying on a forbidden intercourse by tricks and stratagems?'

"'What is it, sir, you mean to say?'

"'That I saw you untie the paper in your hand, from a stone thrown over the hedge; and that I believe it is a letter from your lover.'

"'It is immaterial to me what you believe, sir.'

"'You are mistaken, disdainful girl! for I will this instant go and reveal what I have seen to your deceived father.'

"'Do so,' said I, with great coolness; 'and I will accompany you; for I wish my father not only to see this, but another paper which I have received in the same way, and I conclude from the same quarter; as the information which they contain may probably put him on his guard, as it is meant to do.'

"I looked earnestly at De Merinville as I spoke, and spite of himself I saw him start and change colour.

"'I was only joking, Mademoiselle,' said he; 'you may rely on my honour that I will not betray you to the anger of your father!'

"'Your honour!' echoed I; and looking at him with increased contempt, I took the way to the house, while he accompanied me in silence.

"My father was alone; and De Merinville seemed irresolute whether he should stay with us or not; but I begged him to please himself —and he stayed.

"My father was reading old letters, with a view to burn some; and probably he had been reading one of my poor mother's, for his eyes looked as if he had been shedding tears, and his smile when he saw me was unusually affectionate.

"On hearing the door open he looked up, and observing my excessive paleness and emotion — for I trembled at the task which I had undertaken — he attributed it to the persecuting assiduities of De Merinville; and putting out his hand to me, he said, 'My dear child, I cannot bear to see you look so ill and agitated; — what has happened to you? — Monsieur de Merinville, I gave you leave to address my daughter, that is, to try to make yourself agreeable to her; but if in all this time you have not been able to succeed, I must request you to give over your suit; for though I will never allow my daughter to marry a man whom *I* do not approve, I will never force her to listen to one whom *she* does not.'

"O how welcome to me was this kind, considerate speech! and running to my father, I exclaimed, as I grasped his hand in both mine, 'There spoke my own dear affectionate father once more! and I feared—'

"'What did you fear, my child?' said he.

"'That—that I had lost him for ever!'

"'Foolish girl,' said my father, turning away; 'I see how it is, Adele; you have imbibed very unjust fears and suspicions; and I also know who instilled them into you; but more on this subject another time. What are those papers which you hold in your hand?'

"'The marquis will tell you, sir, that they are love-letters;—but read, and judge for yourself.'

"I gave him the first; and then read the other, which I had not yet gone through; but I observed my father's countenance, and saw him start, knit his brow, and become agitated.

"The second letter only said that the writer had not yet been able to obtain the history of the sister correctly, but should soon; but that there was no doubt of the brother being a man *perdu de reputation*,* and concerned with Monsieur de Pernenau, *un gentilhomme Breton*, in making and circulating false money.† That as he wished to leave France for a time, and his sister and her daughter wished to accompany him, a friend of his family had obtained permission for them to sail in one of the vessels attending the queen-mother; that Mr. Neville, who had once been entertained in Britanny at the house of the marquis, had seen them at Calais, and thoughtlessly given them a letter to Mr. Falkland; but that, on their landing in England, they ceased to have even an apparent connexion with the suite of Henrietta Maria; that on board ship they had become acquainted with some spies of the court of England, who, finding they had letters of introduction to Mr. Falkland, and knowing what sort of people they were, had represented

* Of a blasted reputation.

† See the 2d volume of Madame de Sévigné's Letters.

him as a suspected character, and a presbyterian, (which sect was then, for political purposes, continually accused of plots and conspiracies;) that, therefore, it would be as well for the brother and the sister, if they would undertake to be spies on the words and actions of the unguarded Mr. Falkland; which they readily undertook to do, with this mental reservation—'if it should best suit their own purposes.' My informant added, 'that he had learned what he wrote from an ear-witness, who overheard a conversation at an inn at Dover between a spy and these foreigners, he being supposed not to understand French, the language in which they conversed; that this letter would be followed by another, containing the history of Madame du Vernis, whose husband was nearly as bad as the marquis.'

"While we were reading these letters, Angelique and Adrienne entered radiant in smiles and beauty; and Adrienne running up to my father drew her arm through his; but he rather roughly shook her off, saying, 'I am busy, child;' then bowing to Angelique without speaking, he took and read the second letter; while I saw De Merinville convey by a glance to his sister that all was not right.

"As my father read this second letter, and as he frequently glanced his eyes from it as he read, over the beautiful and seemingly ingenuous countenance of Angelique, his colour heightened, and his eyes lighted up with indignation. At length, crumbling up the papers in his hand, and throwing them on the floor with great violence, he exclaimed, 'These are vile and impudent calumnies, Adele; but their object, and their author, are equally well known to me. Answer me, child—Do you not, in your conscience, believe, that though Delaval did not write, he dictated them?'

"'I do,' replied I firmly; 'and I also know his well-principled slowness to believe harm of any one but on good authority.'

"'Mean-spirited wretch! Assassin of the fame of beauty and innocence! But learn, young lady, that so far from putting your unguarded father *on his guard*, it has made him more confiding than ever; and whatever may have been the youthful errors of the marquis, even this anonymous accuser can as yet fabricate no charge against this admirable lady, but the ridiculous one of her being a spy of government.'

"'What! call me a spy!' exclaimed Angelique, affecting the utmost astonishment.

"'Yes; and your brother, a French nobleman, is accused of having left France because he had coined and circulated bad money.'

"The brother now exclaimed as loudly as the sister; but Angelique melting into tears, said, 'This generous anger and disbelief of the charge from you, sir, does not surprise me; but that your daughter should ever believe such horrible calumnies against me, is to me more difficult to bear than the calumnies themselves.'

"'Dear lady, be composed,' said my father, eagerly hastening to her, and taking her hand with great tenderness; while Adrienne looked at me with a scornful look. Then turning to me, he said, 'Adele, are you not ashamed of yourself! Why do you not instantly beg this injured angel's pardon? Do it this moment, I command you.'

"'Sir, I cannot do it,' replied I, 'conscientiously, because I am not convinced that the charges are false. Let them be inquired into; and if they prove to be false, then'——

"Here I was interrupted by terror at the even maniacal violence of my father, while in a voice inarticulate with passion he exclaimed, 'Unfeeling, selfish, and rebellious girl! Do what I command you instantly, or I will drive you from my roof a disowned and outcast child!'

"It is strange that these horrible words did not deprive me instantly of sense and reason; but I was, as it seemed, superhumanly supported; and I faintly replied, 'Drive me—your only child—the child of your sainted Adelaide—a disowned outcast, from your roof! because she refuses to utter what she believes a falsehood, and humble herself to those whom she believes unworthy!' Then, without waiting his reply, I flew to a whole-length picture of my mother surrounded by her children, which hung opposite to him; and rapidly undrawing the curtain, (which since her death and theirs had always been drawn before it,) I fell on my knees, and invoked her image to plead for her poor Adelaide with my beloved father to forgive me, because I would not act contrary to the precepts which she had taught me, and act and utter what I considered as a lie.

"My poor father was not prepared for this appeal—this strong and desperate appeal to his best feelings—and it overcame him. He threw himself on a chair, and hid his face on his hands, while his bosom heaved with emotion.

"At this moment the good old priest approached me, who had entered unperceived, and had heard all that had passed. 'Rise, my dear child,' said he, lifting me from my knees; 'the image of your blessed mother and her babes, and the entreaties of you—her beloved child—cannot, I am sure, long speak to your father's heart in vain.'

"My father instantly started from his recumbent posture; and faltering out 'Adele!'—I rushed into his extended arms.

"'Such scenes as these should be private,' observed the good old man, looking at the foreigners; who reluctantly took the hint, and he followed them out of the room; but he heard Angelique say, '*Quelle scène! Mais elle a été jouée à merveille de la part de la petite.*'*

* What a scene! But it was played admirably on the little girl's side.

"It was some time before my father was composed enough to speak; and the first thing he uttered was a wish that I would draw the curtain over the picture again. I obeyed; and he was soon tranquil enough to endeavour to reason me out of a belief in Delaval's information. I was very ready to admit that Delaval might be deceived by his informants, though I rejected with indignation the idea of his being willingly deceived, or that he deserved the epithets bestowed on him by my father.

"'Well, well, my child,' he answered, 'I spoke ill-advisedly and in a passion. I have never had reason to doubt Delaval's integrity; and I never disliked any thing in him but his politics and religion.'

"'Which are those of your foreign friends, sir,' said I.

"'Oh! no; not so exactly; *entre nous*, Merinville is certainly and avowedly no catholic. But then he is also a scoffer at all religion, I find; therefore, I am very glad he has not succeeded with you, Adele; as never would I give my child to a boasting infidel like him. But the tractable, pious mind of Madame du Vernis, and the impressible one of Adrienne, are inclined to abjure catholicism, and embrace my faith. And the political sentiments of the marquis and his sister have experienced a considerable change since they knew me.'

"Alas! thought I, the enchantress and the enchanter have attacked my father where he is most vulnerable; and the idea of making converts has undone him.

"'Indeed, Adele,' he continued, 'you are prejudiced against this amiable woman, and I blame Delaval for that. He was alarmed—he suspected that Adrienne had been tutored to feigh a passion for me, and he thought I should be fool enough to marry the child. He has, therefore, tried to win the child's affections himself; and when alone with her, I am told, he left no art untried to make her believe he loved her, and gain her love in return. But Adrienne, poor thing! fancies the affection she feels for me love, because I am affectionate to her, and her own father was cruel; and she has made her mother believe that she is *amoureuse à la mort:* but this I only laugh at; and I expect I shall at least convince Angelique, as well as Adrienne, that this fancied passion for me is no passion at all;—however, it has prevented Delaval's success.'

"'Indeed, sir,' I replied, 'this is a calumny against Delaval; he had no wish to succeed, nor did he try.'

"'Well, Adele, we will not dispute on this subject, as I see we shall not convince each other. But I forgive Delaval; he was weakly afraid that I should marry Adrienne and have a second family, and that you would be no longer an heiress; and he wished to prevent it—that's all.'

"'Oh! sir,' cried I, 'how cruelly you wrong the most disinterested of men! He has wished, earnestly wished you to marry again, that I might be more surely his by ceasing to be an heiress; and were you to make a proper choice, he would exult. But he certainly cannot wish you to marry Adrienne.'

"'Nor do I wish it, I am sure, Adele. Adrienne is very inferior to her mother; for she, Adele, however calumniated, is as honourable and virtuous as she is beautiful—spite of all the calumnious observations to which I have been informed her intimacy with me has given birth.'

"'Virtuous, sir, I am sure she is,' I replied, 'or my father would not continue her as the companion of his daughter. I require no other proof of her innocence in one sense.'

"'That confidence is no more than I have deserved from you, my child. But I fear the neighbourhood are not so candid.'

"'I fear not; and it grieves me to think that my father should incur suspicions of so black a nature.'

"'So it does me; yet the residence of this entertaining woman under my roof has been of such service to me in raising my spirits, that I cannot bear to part with her.'

"'But reputation, sir, ought to be dear too.'

"'It ought. By the by, Adele, I wish you would take the carriage, and make some calls on some of my neighbours to-morrow. I have been told that it is suspected you are very unhappy, and that I have locked you up for presuming to object to my intimacy with Angelique. But if you would show yourself, and take Adrienne with you, as if in perfect amity with her—'

"'Say no more, sir; I will obey you, and go to-morrow accompanied by Adrienne.'

"'There is a good girl,' said my father, kissing my forehead; 'And—' [Here we were interrupted by a message from Madame du Vernis, begging to see my father in her dressing-room. He went, and returned very soon, looking extremely disconcerted.]

"'Adele,' said he, 'you ought to believe me when I say that I consider your dignity as my dignity; and that what would degrade you degrades me. Therefore, I would not wish you to tell Angelique you are sorry for what has past, and that you spoke in anger from my attack on Delaval, if I thought you degraded yourself by doing so.'

"'Sir, my dear father,' I added, after a pause, and in great agitation; 'do not, do not ask of me the only sacrifice I would not gladly make to you. I would sacrifice any thing to you, but that integrity and that self-respect which you and your example have taught me to prize beyond every thing else. I cannot apologize to Madame du Vernis, because I cannot admit that an apology is her due; on the contrary, she owes me one, for her attack on my beloved Delaval.'

"Before my father could reply, Angelique,

as if she had overheard what I said, entered the room, and did apologize to me. Accordingly, I accepted the olive-branch, and peace was restored. We then talked of my projected visits the next day; and Adrienne seemed more delighted than the occasion appeared to warrant, at being allowed to accompany me.

"That evening passed, on the whole, pleasantly away. Angelique had seen, by my father's strong emotion during the scene in the morning, and the relenting tenderness which he had shown towards me, that her empire was not yet sufficiently established for her to throw off the appearance of great regard for me; as her aim at complete ascendency by means of her daughter had, she feared, entirely failed.

"But my self-love, or perhaps I may hope, my better feelings, were now wounded by my father. He used to delight to hear me sing and play to the guitar; but now he was continually finding fault with my performances, and comparing them with Angelique's, and wishing I would learn of her, and to play and sing like her; and I found that one of my means of contributing to my father's enjoyment was now annihilated.

"The next morning, accompanied by Adrienne, I went in the carriage to call at some houses in the neighbourhood. But the uniform answer at the door, after my being there had been announced to the mistress of the house, was, 'My lady will see you, madam; but she can't see any stranger.' And I was uniformly forced to leave Adrienne in the carriage. Nor, when I made my appearance, was there any excuse of illness or dishabille made for not receiving my companion.

"One lady was, however, very honest and communicative on the subject, and told me 'she was delighted to see that I was not quite shut up; and that my father's commanding officer (that odious woman his French companion) had not forbidden me entirely that enjoyment of respectable society which she had forfeited herself.'

"At first I was too confused, too shocked, and too indignant to be able to answer; but when I was, I hope and trust that my filial piety, agonized at so gross an imputation on my beloved and respected father, made me repel with great energy, and I trust with great effect, this hateful and plausible calumny. And I assured the lady, 'that I was convinced Madame du Vernis was an innocent and injured woman; and that even if she were not so, my father was too good a man to allow his daughter to associate with a woman whom he believed unworthy; and that, on the contrary, I was sure he considered her as one of the most irreproachable of human beings, and had no regard for her inconsistent with the most rigid virtue.'

"'But you will own appearances are against them both, and that the world are justified in talking?'

"'Recollect,' answered I, 'that the daughter of Madame du Vernis is with her, and that she is under the protection of her brother.'

"'Yes; but what a brother! a man of infamous character! And after all, recollect how little regard is paid in France to the marriage tie! No, no, dear Adelaide, appearances are wrong, very wrong.'

"What could I say? I was silent and depressed, and gladly put an end to a visit which exposed me to hear unwelcome observations on one whose good name and reputation were sacred in my eyes; and who, I was sure, was incapable of encouraging a feeling of love for the wife of another.

"This was luckily my last visit.

"When I rejoined Adrienne,—after having been told that I could not suppose any countenance would be shown the daughter of a mother who appeared in so suspicious a light, I found a young man of very engaging appearance seated in the carriage by her side; and with some little appearance of embarrassment she introduced him to me as Monsieur Desborough, a gentleman who came over in the same vessel with them, and had accompanied them to London.

"I thought it strange that we should never have heard any of the party mention this young man; and while I was hesitating whether it was right for me to invite him home with us or not, he had kissed the hand of Adrienne and disappeared.

"'This last was a short visit,' said Adrienne.

"I was surprised, for it had been a very long one; and I could not help replying, 'Your companion must have made it appear so; for it was by far the longest that I made.'

"Adrienne blushed, made no reply, and turned the conversation.

"On our road home I fancied once or twice that Adrienne seemed uncomfortable, and that she appeared desirous of speaking to me on some particularly interesting subject, but had not courage; and as I feared it might be to urge a request that I would not mention her having seen and conversed alone with young Desborough, I was very glad when we reached home, as I wished to escape all danger of such a petition.

"As soon as we alighted, my father summoned me to his study, and insisted on my telling him without any reservation what had passed at our visits; and I did so, sparing his feelings as much as I could.

"The refusal of every lady on whom I called to admit Adrienne, filled him with lively astonishment and indignation, and he resented it for the sake of Madame du Vernis. But when I was forced to own to him that his daughter had been obliged to defend his deeply wounded reputation, I saw that he then resented the indignity offered to himself, and that he felt the

degradation of being so circumstanced as to require to be defended by his child.

"However, to my great relief, he at once admitted that appearances should not be disregarded; and that as De Merinville and Adrienne were not considered as sufficient guardians of the fame of Angelique unless a grave and proper matron could be invited to stay at the house, the foreigners should remove to a house in the immediate neighbourhood, and near enough for every-day intercourse. I dared not to say that I thought the only effectual method of putting an end to the scandal, would be their immediate removal to London.

"I did not see Angelique and De Merinville till we met at dinner; when Madame du Vernis' angry feelings at Adrienne's not being received, were visible to me, under the disguise of smiles and softness, which she always wore when she addressed my father. For, as cracks in an enamelled face betray the real complexion underneath, so the contracted brow and fiery eyes of Angelique were very perceptible to an observer like me, through the varnish of her highly polished and oily manners.

"Angelique asked me, however, some questions relative to our drive, and wished me to smooth the ruffled plumes of her self-love, by accounting, by some kind invention, for Adrienne's not being allowed to accompany me to my friends. But as I would not violate the truth, even to please a friend, I certainly would not do it to oblige an enemy; and I said nothing in reply to her observations, but that the time had not always, I trusted, appeared very long to Mademoiselle du Vernis, as I found she had a companion during my last visit.

"'Indeed,' exclaimed Angelique, darting an angry look at Adrienne; 'she did not tell me so.'

"And before the abashed girl could reply, I told the alarmed mother, 'that her companion was a Mr. Desborough, a very fine young man, their *compagnon de voyage*.'

"If looks could have annihilated, those of her uncle and her mother would have annihilated the conscious Adrienne. Still there was in her answering look a degree of defiance, mingling with confusion, which then I could not account for. But as my father, who had left the room, now returned, the looks were laid aside and the subject seemed forgotten; while Adrienne, as if to make her peace with her mother, went and sat in my father's chair, as usual; and tried to keep up, as usual, the falsehood of her being tenderly enamoured of him.

"But that night, though it failed to unblind my father, afforded a pretty certain proof of the unprincipled hypocrisy and artifice both of the mother and the daughter; for while the former persisted, though vainly, in trying to make my father believe Adrienne was in love with him, and the daughter assisted her to the utmost of her power, the latter acted on the impulse of a real passion, which the mother knew of, and had disapproved, and eloped in the dead of the night with that very young man who had, by her own appointment, watched for her on the road, in the morning, prepared with a letter to tell her all was ready for their flight, if he had not had an opportunity of speaking to her alone.

"Adrienne was not missed till the next day; and then not only the rage but the distress of the justly-punished parent was painful to behold; and I could not but approve the affectionate interest which my father expressed in her sorrow, while he exclaimed with a graceful and becoming simplicity, 'There! I told you the child was not in love with *me*;' while the idea that Angelique had meant to impose on him, never entered his unsuspicious mind; for his noble nature was ever above suspicion.

"The distress of Angelique was not occasioned merely by seeing all her designs of that sort on my father frustrated entirely; she feared, unhappy woman, that Desborough did not mean to marry Adrienne. And while my father and De Merinville set off immediately in pursuit of the fugitives, the sight of a parent's alarm for the endangered honour of her child, was sufficiently affecting to melt even my just coldness towards the now real sufferer; and I look back with wonder at the feelings of affectionate concern which I not only exhibited, but really experienced, towards Angelique, till the good news arrived of her daughter's being married, first at the chapel, and then at the church in the Savoy. And as Desborough, though not rich, was in a lucrative profession, and the son of a gentleman, I thought the girl was more fortunate than her conduct deserved, or than her situation warranted. But when the gentlemen returned to us, Merinville took occasion in the course of the evening to mention the necessity there was for him to go to London for a few weeks; and as his sister would then have no proper protector in the eyes of the world, he must, though reluctantly, urge her to accompany him.

"My father could not be so complete a traitor to the cause of propriety as to object to the departure of this fascinating woman; and to the disappointment of the foreigners, he replied, 'If you, De Merinville, must really go, I see, I feel the necessity of Angelique's accompanying you.'

"My dear, my honoured father, how proud of him I felt at this moment! But I saw that Angelique and De Merinville were disconcerted, as they feared this speech argued a decay of interest and affection towards the former; and I observed that the brother and the sister had a long conference together that evening.

"Nothing more was said of De Merinville's departure till the evening of the next day, and then it was fixed to take place three days from the present time; while I retired to rest, thank-

ful to Providence for having allowed a term to be put at length to my domestic annoyance.

"The day had been very hot; so much so, as to make the poor old priest, who was evidently declining every hour, exceedingly unwell. The evening and the night were equally sultry; and as I was not sleepy, I sat up reading, and had just come to that electrifying passage in Comus, where the enchanter takes the lady prisoner, when I thought that I heard a tap at the door of my apartment; and the tap seemed followed by a groan. I started with apprehension, for the clock had just struck two, and I believed I was the only one up in the family; while, with suspended breath, I listened for a repetition of the noises—and they were repeated. But the tap and the groan were much fainter. Though terrified, and expecting I knew not what, I had, however, sufficient courage to unlock and open my door, when I beheld the good old priest looking at me with a countenance of horror, and with every feature bearing on it the dread impression of approaching death.

"'Oh! my child,' said he, catching hold of my arm for support, while he staggered to the bed, and threw himself upon it; 'I am dying; but I hope to live long enough to tell you—I overheard—Oh! that vile man, and viler woman! I heard—I....' Here his voice failed, his lips became convulsed, and I saw that his last agonies were approaching, while he vainly fumbled in his robe, and cast an inquiring look round the room. I understood that asking eye; and fetching with eager haste the crucifix from my oratory, I held it before the uplifted eyes of the venerable and pious man; and while he grasped it with his trembling hand, the fingers suddenly loosed their hold, and breathing his last breath, he fell back without a groan.

"Many and turbulent years have since passed over my head; but never, never can I forget the bewildering agony of this strange and sudden event.

"I felt my senses fail me; I knelt beside the unconscious being who was associated with all I had loved from childhood, and who was himself beloved by me; and I spoke to him, and conjured him to answer me. But when I gazed on those fixed and unclosed eyes, and awoke again to the whole of the afflicting reality, I started from the bed in all the violence of frenzy, and uttered shrieks which echoed dismally through the sounding walls of the mansion.

"The noise awoke every one in the house; but my father was the first who came to me; and almost speechless with terror and amazement, he beheld the being whom he most venerated, lying a corpse on the bed of his child; and that child evidently under an alienation of reason.

"I recollect that it was my father's caresses and pathetic lamentations over me that first brought me to myself. But when I recovered my reason, I was for some time wholly unable to describe a scene so strange, so short, so sudden, and so afflicting!

"Powerful, indeed, must the motive have been that could impel the good old man to disturb me, and seek my apartment in the dead of night; and agitating indeed the feelings that could thus hurry on the hour of his dissolution. And whom had he seen? And what had he heard? And what did he mean by 'Oh! that vile man, and viler woman!'

"I had no doubt but that, as was his custom if too restless to sleep, he had been praying in the chapel which communicated with the garden; and when I was composed enough to think, I had no doubt but that during a thunder shower the plotting brother and sister, who had taken the advantage of the night to walk and plot unseen, had sought shelter in the chapel; and there, not seeing the aged supplicant, who had perhaps hidden himself in alarm, had disclosed to each other some *intended machinations*, which he had overheard, and, being conscious of impending dissolution, had resolved to communicate to me immediately.

"But nothing from human lips ever cleared up the mystery. Why he came, and all that he heard, can only be known at that dread day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. My conjecture however was, no doubt, just; but though the next day a gold bracelet of Angelique's was found in the chapel, (and certainly before she had been in it that day,) I dared not mention my suspicions to my father; and she declared that all the old man did and uttered was from the delirium of death. I, however, saw that the foreigners were very anxious to know all he did utter, and that they inquired with quivering lips; and could I have thought a violation of truth justifiable in any instance, I would have played upon their fears, and terrified their guilty consciences, by insinuating that he said more than I repeated. But when solemnly asked by my father if I had really related all that he said, I as solemnly assured him that I had told all; and I saw their countenances clear up immediately.

"I will not dwell on the wretched feelings which were mine the next day, composed of sorrow for the dead, and fear of and for the living—a vague mysterious fear, born of the mysterious circumstances which had occasioned it. Nor will I attempt to describe the agony I endured when I followed in the funeral procession the last relic of my departed mother and kindred. And when I beheld the grave close on this dear and affectionate being, I seemed to see my mother and her children entombed again, and as if nearly all who loved me were removed for ever from me.

"But confidence in the mercy and justice of the power who had afflicted me, enabled me to bear up under the pressure of those afflictions.

"I have already mentioned what my suspi-

cions originally were, and they were now about to receive a most unwelcome confirmation. Two days after my old friend's death, the marquis received a letter in the presence of his sister, my father, and myself. On perusing it he started, seemed considerably agitated, and beckoning my father to follow him, rushed out of the room. I, who was always *expecting stratagems*, now turned a glance of suspicion towards Angelique, who taking out some eau de luce and seeming very faint, though she did not change colour, declared her alarm lest something had happened to Adrienne. But I did not hazard a single conjecture, and awaited the return of the gentlemen in almost trembling anxiety.

"At length my father returned, full, I thought, of emotion, but rather of a pleasurable kind; and approaching Angelique, he said, 'Dear, dear Angelique! I am come to conduct you to your brother.' He then led her out of the room.

"My foreboding heart instantly whispered what that letter, that fabricated letter, too probably announced, and I retired to my own chamber, to implore of the 'God who heareth prayer,' fortitude to endure as became me, and the pupil of such a mother as mine was, the new and bitter trial which I believed awaited me.

"Having performed this duty, I returned to the room which I had quitted, resigned and composed.

"I found my father there; and I observed that he looked thoughtful, and wholly unconscious of external objects. On hearing the door shut, he started however from his reverie; and seeing me, advanced to meet me.

"'Adele,' said he, 'poor Angelique's husband is dead.'

"I expected to hear this information, and I coolly replied, 'Is he any loss, sir?'

"'Loss! Why, really, as to that I cannot exactly say; but still you may suppose she is at first rather shocked, rather overpowered, and she wishes at present to see no one but her brother.'

"'*I* shall certainly not intrude upon her sorrows, sir,' was my reply.

"I conclude that my tone was rather sarcastic, for I saw my father cast on me an inquiring and angry look; but he said nothing; and I, wishing to avoid further conversation concerning a woman whom I could not either approve, like, or trust, took up a book, and my father did the same. But I saw that he did not, could not read; nor, to say the truth, could I; for I was convinced that the crisis of my poor father's fate was now arrived, and that the sun of my domestic happiness was set for ever. Still I did not credit the truth of the intelligence. I did not believe that Du Vernis was really dead. But recurring to the poor old priest's expressions of 'Oh! that vile man, and still viler woman!' and to his eagerness to tell me what he had heard, when death arrested on his lips the unfinished sentence, I suspected that what he had overheard was a proposal from the brother, eagerly acceded to by the sister, that as Adrienne could not now marry my father, Angelique should; and that Du Vernis, who did not care what his wife did, provided she could get money, should be declared to be dead, with all possible expedition.

"This, to be sure, was then merely my own conjecture. Still I was convinced I was right—so much reliance had I on the communications which I had received; and so sure was I, from my own observation, that Madame du Vernis was a woman of consummate artifice, and little better than an *aventurière*.

"But if I was right, there was one gleam of hope for *me*, and one prospect of ultimate relief for my father *too*. If the husband was really not dead, and she married my father, the marriage was no marriage; and when he wished to be relieved, he could be so.

"But, in the mean while, his fortune might be utterly ruined, and his peace destroyed;—and while these thoughts were passing in my mind, no book could engage my attention.

"Angelique appeared no more that evening; but my father was allowed to go to her. I, therefore, not being disposed to a *tête-à-tête* with De Merinville, who officiously came to sit with me, retired early to my own apartment.

"The next day Angelique sent a message by the marquis to my father, requesting he would allow her to take a drive with her brother; and though my father, no doubt, wished that she had chosen some other escort, he acceded to the request.

"They were gone some hours. When they returned, Angelique, leaning on my father, (who flew to hand her out,) was prevailed upon to enter the common sitting-room. On seeing me for the first time since her loss, she assumed a look of excessive seriousness, and seemed to expect from me a compliment of condolence. But I was not hypocrite enough to offer one; and my only civility was asking her to take refreshments after her drive.

"'But where can you have been,' said my father, 'to be absent so many hours?'

"'We have been,' replied the marquis, assuming an air of consequence and dignity, 'we have been in search of lodgings, somewhere within a few miles of this place, as Angelique wishes not, during the first months of her widowhood, to be seen in London; and here, especially during my absence, you must feel, sir, it is now improper that she should remain.'

"My father at first looked grieved at this intelligence; but recovering himself, he said, 'certainly, certainly—I feel that you are quite right. But—but—I hope that you are not going to remove very far off.'

"'No,' replied Angelique, in a voice of

captivating sweetness, which even I could never hear without admiration; —'we could not, after driving about some time, procuring a lodging more than four miles off.'

"'Four miles! Oh! that is too far. But I trust that when De Merinville comes back from London, you will see no objection to return hither.'

"'We will talk of that at some future time,' said Angelique with modest reserve, as if to heighten the respectful admiration which my father entertained for her; and at the same time to increase that love for her which, being now no longer opposed by principle, he would, she doubted not, be soon unable to restrain. And I could not but observe that Angelique cast on me, every now and then, looks of triumph and defiance.

"Angelique, however, spite of her decorum, stayed under our roof till her mourning arrived from London; and the widow's band, worn by French women, and usually so unbecoming, seemed on her only an increase to her natural loveliness; and while I disliked and feared, I could not but gaze on her, and admire. Indeed, indeed, I could excuse my father's now evident adoration of her.

"At length Angelique and De Merinville, who, on his sister's account, put off his journey to London, departed for their new abode; and I was at least relieved in one respect—I ceased to see, for the present, objects that were disagreeable to me; but then I knew only too well, that when they returned, it would be, probably, to quit us no more.

"But while I rejoiced, my father mourned; for the artful Angelique, in order by absence and difficulty to increase my father's regard, refused to see him for a whole fortnight after she was settled in her new habitation; and when he rode over to inquire after her, and entreat admittance to her presence, she refused to see him, and even begged that he would not call at her door.

"The consequence was, that as my father could not see her, he was always writing to her, and sending her provisions and dainties; and I was forced to order all sorts of sweets and nice made dishes to tempt the appetite of Angelique. But when evening came, and the long letter and the nice things were sent, my father, having nothing to do for the beloved object till the next day, became restless and miserable.

"'Get your guitar, Adele,' said he one night, 'and sing and play to me; sing that little Venetian air of which I am so fond.'

"I obeyed, but reluctantly; as I feared that my singing would not please him; and my fears were just.

"'Adele,' said he, 'that is not the way Angelique sings it. It is surprising to me that you, who have heard her sing it so often, should not have caught any thing of her manner.'

"'I sing it,' replied I, with difficulty repressing my tears, 'as my poor mother taught it to me; and you used to admire her manner of singing it.'

"'Did I?' he replied in some confusion; 'Oh! yes—true—I believe I did; but then I had not heard Angelique.'

"'Would you never had!' thought I; and I sighed audibly as I did so. My father echoed the sigh; but whether his sigh was occasioned by the dead or the living, I cannot determine.

"'You see, Adele,' said he, after a pause, 'what a nice sense of propriety (the child and the guardian of innocence) Madame du Vernis has—spite of the cruel aspersions on her fair fame.'

"'How has she proved it, sir?'

"'By removing from my house under her present circumstances, and refusing to see me.'

"'Refusing to see you! And for how long a time?'

"'Oh! a fortnight is the term of my exile.'

"'She thinks, then, propriety requires very short sacrifices. Will her brother be returned by that time?'

"'Yes—that is—probably, I believe. But I see, Adele, that let Angelique do what she will, she will never have your good word.'

"'Not so, sir; but I cannot agree to give any one praise when I think it undeserved. As to the removal of this lady now, I fear it will injure her fame still more; because, while she was under your roof, and was my companion, none but your most malignant enemies—your political ones I mean—could dare to believe in their hearts that she was more to you than a friend. But now it will seem as if all was not right between you, and that you had therefore removed her.'

"'I protest that is very true,' said my father, rising, and walking backwards and forwards; 'very true, Yes—yes,' he added, muttering it to himself—'Yes—yes—this makes the necessity of separation even still more strong;—her fame has suffered, and still suffers—yes—yes.'

"Then snatching up his hat he left the room; and I heard him soon after walking rapidly to and fro on the gravel-walk under the window.

"At length the term of exile ended, and every day and all day my father spent at the lodgings of Angelique. I in the mean time was invited to dinner parties in the neighbourhood; but I would not go, because I knew I should be exposed to hear observations on my father, to which, as a child, it did not become me to listen.

"During this period, I suffered much additional pain that I had not foreseen. Absence from Delaval, and being commanded by my father to conquer my attachment to him, and to hold no intercourse with him, were alone sufficient to depress my spirits. But in addi-

tion to this evil, was the prospect of still greater impending over me; and to complete my annoyance, (for suffering perhaps I should not call it,) my father never returned from visiting Angelique, without reading me a lecture on economy and house-keeping, and the management of a family; telling me that Madame du Vernis was so surprised when she heard of his enormous yearly expenditure, that she declared there must be great extravagance somewhere; that, for want of good *surveillance*, he was eaten up by his servants. 'I really wish, Adele,' he added, 'that you would look a little into these things.'

"'A little, sir; I look a great deal.'

"'It is to little purpose, then.'

"'You used to think differently, sir, of what I did,' I replied, bursting into tears; 'but I can do nothing to please you now. And what should this French woman know,' I continued, (my voice growing firmer from indignation,) 'of what is necessary for the maintenance of English servants—the servants of a generous, hospitable English country gentleman? They cannot—must not—will not be fed on *soupe-maigre et bouilli*.'

"'You are warm, Adele. Indeed I never saw any one's temper so altered.'

"'What with the loss of my beloved Delaval, and other things,' replied I, 'I think I have enough to try it.' Then, unable any longer to keep my agitation in decent bounds, I ran out of the room.

"I do not, cannot justify these ebullitions of angry feelings, and to a parent, too; but I still think the trials I was enduring were severe.

"When Angelique had been a widow about six weeks, De Merinville returned; and soon after my father told me that he himself was going to London for a week or two; he, therefore, urged me to send and invite myself to stay at the house of some of my friends. 'Not that I believe,' added he, looking earnestly at me, 'that you would take advantage of my absence to elope with Delaval, or even to receive him here.'

"Does any one else dare to think it, sir?' cried I, indignant at the implied distrust. 'No, sir, thanks to my education, I am not likely to elope with any one. My mother was not likely to have formed an Adrienne.'

"This was wrong;—I know it was. However, I had the good feeling to repent instantly; and I entreated my father to forgive the hasty words drawn from me by indignation, at being even for a moment suspected of doing a mean and unworthy action. But my repentance was vain, and my father left me in silent and stern displeasure.

"The next day he went away before six in the morning. I, however, rose to bid him farewell; but his adieu was hurried, cold, and uncomfortable. He looked flushed, and his hand was feverish.

"'When may I hope to see you again?' said I.

"'Not yet; I do not exactly know. But I will write.' And with a nod of the head, as if he was not even thinking of me, he drove off.

"The fortnight of my father's absence and my solitude was not, I trust, thrown away on me, as I fortified my mind by reading and reflection, and conversation with the priest, an old friend of his regretted predecessor, who came from a catholic family near us to officiate in our chapel. It was but a small number of worshippers whom he found there; for a catholic servant of our own, and those of the foreigners, were usually, with myself, the only attendants. Even her religious as well as political opinions, Angelique had sacrificed at the altar of my father's good will; therefore, when she was our guest, she rarely joined us. As I was now the only one in the family to whom this good priest's presence was welcome, he was rarely asked to stay when he came. Now, however, the case was different; I was alone, and his society was precious to me. He, therefore, obtained leave to stay a whole week with me; and I felt not only consoled and strengthened by his soothing piety, but instructed and amused by the variety of his attainments. Pere Anselm was a Frenchman, and had associated much with his distinguished and reverend compatriots, Bossuet, the D'Arnauds, and Bourdaloue; and while by a great effort I forced myself to attend to their works, while he read them aloud to me or I read to him, I forgot all the sorrows which were present to me, and those which were to come; and was convinced that there are few griefs which *mental occupation* cannot allay.

"But I was called from this pleasant medicine to a sick mind, and forced to dismiss my physician, by a letter from my father, announcing his return, and desiring me to order a room to be prepared for Adrienne and her husband.

"I obeyed orders; and they all arrived to dinner at our house. But the brother and sister went home at night; and I should have been glad had the bride and bridegroom accompanied them; as I had no feeling or sentiment in common with either of them, and thought that Adrienne's husband was as insipid as well as handsome as herself.

"One morning as usual I was walking along that walk in which I every day hoped to receive the long-promised and long-delayed communication relative to Angelique, when the expected signal was made, and a stone fell at my feet. Eagerly indeed did I open the paper; and I was so absorbed in its contents, that I was unconscious of the approach of Adrienne, who, I am convinced, read a little while over my shoulder; but who, thinking I had discovered her, playfully put her hand over the paper, and exclaimed, 'Ah! you are reading a letter from your lover, I suppose!'

"I started, and indignantly replied, "If I am, I am not going to elope.'

"'The more fool you,' replied the unabashed girl, and left me, I did not doubt, to seek out her uncle, who was with Desborough, and tell them what she had seen.

"The letter informed me, (and it was Delaval's hand-writing,) that being resolved to send me no information that was not strictly true, and that could not be thoroughly depended on, he had forborne to write till he had obtained such information.

"That Angelique was certainly, he found, the natural child of Merinville's father, by an English woman of great talent but low birth; and thence her knowledge of English, or rather her power of speaking it; that she was educated in France for the stage, and thence her variety of personal accomplishments and power of recitation; but that during her first engagement at a provincial theatre, she so captivated the heart of Du Vernis, a profligate man of the law, that as a higher bribe than her other lovers would give, he offered to marry her, provided she would quit the stage. She did so, and they were married. But her noble brother, the marquis, never could endure the alliance; and by his *hauteur* so disgusted Du Vernis, that he frequently forbade him the house, and was rendered miserable by the ascendency which the brother had over his sister; that after some recent scenes of a disagreeable nature between Du Vernis and Merinville, the former of whom thought that an unprincipled lawyer was as good as a coining and infamous marquis, Du Vernis again forbade Merinville his house; and that Angelique and Adrienne declared they would live with him no longer; that he rejoiced to hear them say so; and that on Merinville's being forced to quit Paris for a time, those ladies had accompanied him to England.

"This was all the letter; for Delaval was too honourable to make it the vehicle of an intercourse so positively forbidden by my father; but the hand-writing was his, and the letter came from him; and I had a sadly soothing pleasure in pressing it to my lips and my heart.

"But I must own, the contents of the letter disappointed me. It contained no charge against the character of Angelique. It only showed she was of illegitimate birth, and had been a short time on the stage; and though to be an actress—a person unknown in England till the Restoration — was synonymous in France with courtesan, still, Angelique had married respectably at sixteen, which spoke well for her character and her principles; therefore, there was no apparent profligacy of conduct to oppose my father's making her his wife. Still there were strong obstacles to it, in her being a natural child, and far, far more in my father's prejudice against actresses, and his pride of family. But then my father was now really in love.

"However, one thing was certain; it was right that I should show him this communication, whether it made for or against my wishes; and I was resolved to do so the very first fair opportunity.

"In the mean while, I could not but be struck by the still-increasing intimacy and familiarity between my father and Angelique—a familiarity which was not only, I thought, improper in such an early stage of widowhood, but at any time, and even between avowedly engaged lovers. I was also sensible of a still more painful change during the month succeeding my father's return, and since the return of De Merinville and his sister to take up their abode under our roof; and that was an increasing pettishness and coldness in my father's manner to me. If I looked pale, and I did alarmingly so, he no longer regarded it. If I was unwell, it drew from him no attentions; while he watched every change of colour in Angelique; gave her his arm if she only walked across the room; set a footstool before her whenever she sat down; and was continually persuading her to rest her limbs on the sofa, while he put pillows to support her beautiful head.

"The dinner, too, was now never approved by my father; for Angelique had contrived to give him a very high opinion of her own housewifery, and a very mean one of mine. Sometimes he said that I stuffed his guests even to a surfeit, and sometimes I starved them; but no dish was ever made well. And then my father used to add, with a tender look at Angelique, 'These are not such nice little ragoûts as you used to give me at your lodgings; but then you superintended. Adele is a good girl, but she does not understand or attend to these things.'

"All this was trying and provoking; because I saw that it was not my father himself who thus judged me of his own accord; but that these ideas and this disaffection had been instilled into him. I must, however, do myself the justice to say, that I bore all this without repining, and with proper filial respect. So far I have nothing to reproach myself with; a tear would sometimes force itself into my eyes, when I thought of times past; but, on the whole, I was able to behave, I hope, as I ought.

"One morning I rose rather earlier than usual, in hopes of catching an opportunity of seeing my father, who commonly was an early riser; and finding myself alone in the room where my mother's picture hung, I undrew the curtain, and indulged myself in looking at it. While I was thus employed, my father entered; but he cast, I saw, a glance wholly devoid of emotion on the picture, and rather coldly told me I was down very early.

"'Yes,' replied I, turning from the picture without re-drawing the curtain, 'I wished to give myself a chance of seeing you alone. I

have another communication from Delaval, which I have thought myself bound in duty to show you.'

"'Foolish girl!' said my father, smiling;—'you have done right, no doubt; but you may spare yourself the trouble of giving, and me of reading, your manifesto; for I dare say I can guess all that it contains.'

"'Pardon me, sir, if I differ from you, totally.'

"'How so?'

"'I conceive that you cannot be acquainted with all I have to communicate.'

"'Shall I anticipate? But first let me say, that the poor marquis owns he has been the innocent agent of passing counterfeit money; as De Pomenars is his relation, and was base enough to impose on his credulity;—consequently, for his sake and his own, he was advised to leave his country. In the next place, you have to tell me that Angelique is the natural child of the Marquis de Merinville, by an English lady, which I knew before; that she was educated for the stage, and thence her all-excelling personal graces and talents.'

"'Yes, sir; and that she was on the stage till taken thence by her husband, Monsieur du Vernis.'

"'No, Adele, no,' he answered, with great quickness; 'Du Vernis made proposals to Angelique before she ever had been on the stage at all; and her delicacy of mind and shrinking feminine modesty led her to accept his offer, though the lover had not touched her heart, in order to avoid the contamination of a public life.'

"'My correspondent says differently, sir;—and assures me that what he says is correct.'

"'And you, no doubt, believe him, Miss Falkland, out of pique and prejudice?'

"Angelique, De Merinville, and Adrienne, now entered the room.

"'Well, Angelique,' said he, after having, with his arm round her waist, borne her to a seat,—'Well, the communication which Adrienne told us of, was such as you expected and anticipated.'

"And, no doubt,' replied Angelique, looking like any thing rather than an *angel* at me,—'no doubt Mademoiselle believes all she is told in that letter. But she ought, in common justice, to remember, that her informant, Mr. Delaval, is an incensed, prejudiced, partial, ungenerous, and vindictive informant.'

"'I cannot remember, madam,' cried I, 'what is *not*. Delaval is incapable of being ungenerous and vindictive; and so far from wishing to judge even you hastily and unjustly, weeks have elapsed since his first communications, because he was afraid of sending me reports not worthy of credit.'

"'You mean to say, then, madam,' said Angelique, rising from her chair in excessive agitation, 'that you believe all that Mr. Delaval asserts?'

"'I do,' replied I, rising, also, and giving way to those feelings of anger towards her, which I carefully controlled towards my ever-beloved father; 'I do, Madame du Vernis. Nay, more. I will own to you, that I believe—and not from any communication from Delaval, for I have made none to him—that your brother and yourself were 'the *vile man* and *viler woman*,' whom my dear lost friend mentioned, and whom he came to warn me against; and that what he heard,—overheard unconsciously,—and came, alas! vainly, to relate to me, was the plan you were then concerting, and have since acted upon—namely, to pretend the death of Monsieur du Vernis. Your motives for so doing I need not explain to you;—but take notice that what I now tell you is the uninfluenced belief—suggested by her own observation alone—of me, Adelaide Falkland.'

"No, it was not prejudice, not prepossession, I did behold on the pale cheek of both the signs of conscious detection. But my triumph was momentary; for my father rose, and coming towards me with lips quivering with passion, and with an arm raised as if in menace, exclaimed, 'Then Adelaide Falkland shall retract and unsay her base, unworthy, and unwarrantable suspicions, and her insolent, insulting utterance of them, or never more be child of mine, but an outcast from my heart and from my home!'

"'Retract! unsay what I have said and asserted! Your child—my mother's child—my dear though cruel father!' I replied, made courageous by despair—'Never, never!'

"'Then we part this hour, Miss Falkland; and you yourself will see the necessity of it when I tell you that this admirable and exemplary being whom you have dared thus grossly to calumniate and insult, is my wife!'

"'Your wife!' I vociferated; 'already your wife! so soon too after—' Then extending my hand in powerless agony towards the picture of my own beloved mother—a gesture that had certainly nothing conciliating in it, I sunk insensible on the floor. On my recovery, I found servants only assisting to recover me; the faithful old butler was supporting my head, and I saw the tears trickle down his cheek. But my father, my once tender father, was supporting his bride, and holding salts to her nose, murmuring out as he did so, 'My dearest angel! be composed;—in your situation, how I tremble at an agitation like this!'

"He now observed that I had recovered from my swoon; and dismissing the attendants, he said, 'I conclude, Miss Falkland, that your own good sense must inform you that your residence under this roof is no longer possible; and I dare say that I am not mistaken in adding, that such a residence would now be as painful to you as it would be to us.'

"'Certainly, sir,' said I, wringing my hands in agony; 'certainly—it would indeed.'

"'Then, Miss Falkland, the sooner we part the better. In a few months you will be of age, and then you will have an independent and sufficient fortune; but till that time comes, I will be your banker.'

"'You need not, sir,' replied I; 'till that time comes, I have money sufficient for my wants in the retirement to which I shall hasten; and I beg leave to decline your bounty.'

"'Well, madam, just as you please,' replied my father, surprised, I believe, to see in me a pride and a spirit equal to the situation; 'And now, Miss Falkland, let me add, that my carriage, if you will deign to accept its service, shall convey you to London; and also, if you permit, to my house there, till you are provided with another abode, as we shall be there ourselves soon. But mark me, Miss Falkland, though on proper submission Mrs. Falkland and myself may again receive you to our favour, I command you, on pain of my malediction, not to receive Delaval, that mean calumniator, as your husband, or even as your lover!'

"'I shall obey you, sir,' I replied, with such calmness, and I venture to add, such respect, as I now look back upon with wonder. 'Though you, sir, have cast off the kindness and the duty of a father, I should not be warranted in casting off the duty of a child.' Then, making him and the rest of the party a low obeisance, I left the room, and repaired to mine to pack up my things, and prepare for banishment from the paternal roof. But when I reached my apartment, my unnatural composure vanished; and the idea of what brought me there came over my mind with such overwhelming force that I sunk, drowned in tears, upon the bed, incapable of exertion. Nor was my composure increased by the sight of my own maid standing by me, and that of her fellow-servants at the door, giving me tear for tear, and sigh for sigh, and anxious to know whether what old Mansel said was true, and if they were going to lose their dear young lady. And when I replied in the affirmative, the sight of their violent grief was so overpowering to me, that I was forced to beg all but my own maid would leave the room.

"When I was a little composed, I asked Jennings, (my maid,) whether she was willing to follow my fortune; and it was some time before the faithful creature could articulate—'Can you doubt it, Miss Falkland?'

"To be brief. Hopeless, and indeed not desirous of my father's rescinding his resolution, we packed up with all possible despatch; and in four hours' time I was ready to bid a long, if not final, farewell to my paternal roof. The carriage was now come round, and I was ordered to attend my father in his study.

"'May I presume to ask,' said he, concealing, as I thought and hoped, much feeling under an air of great coldness, 'where you intend to reside?'

"'It is my intention, sir, to reside at present as a boarder in the Nunnery at York, as it is called, of which, as you know, a first cousin and a dear friend of my mother's is the governess; and then perhaps I shall go into a convent abroad.'

"'You have no intention of taking the veil, I hope?'

"'No; not at present at least. Yet parted from my lover, and now deprived of my father—deprived of every tie to bind me to the world—what, sir, could the forlorn and orphan Adelaide do better than devote herself wholly to her God?'

"My father for a moment seemed speechless from strong emotion; but recovering himself, he said, 'Remember, Adelaide, that it is through your own fault alone that you are separated from your father; and remember also, that on proper submission from you, I shall be glad to receive you again. Now fare well, and God bless you!'

"He then kissed my cheek, and waving me with his hand to the door, I got out of the room as well as I could, and was hastening to the carriage when I found my way impeded by an assembly of every servant in the house.

"'My dear young lady,' said the old butler, 'we all mean to quit as soon as you are gone; for we will not stay to be ordered by that French madame, whom my poor deluded master has made his wife, and for whose sake he has turned you out of doors.'

"'Turned you out of doors!'—it was the fact certainly; yet I then heard the mortifying and agonizing truth for the first time as it were, and it almost made me wild; nor could I have kept my feet, if I had not caught hold of the balusters of the staircase for support.

"When I could bear to think, and then to speak, I told Mansel I wished to speak with him; and I led him into the room in which hung the picture of my mother surrounded by her children. The curtain was still undrawn as I had left it; and falling on my knees before it, I was enabled to shed tears so abundantly, and pray so fervently, that I rose calmed and supported.

"'Now, Mansel,' said I, 'hear me, and treasure what I say in your memory and your heart. These servants of yesterday may, if they please, quit the service they no longer like; but how can you reconcile it to your sense of duty to leave, even out of generous feeling towards me, a master so kind as my father has been to you through a long series of years? Remember,' said I, 'my good old man, you are even grown grey in his service.'

"'But, my dear young lady, if a master changes, may not a servant change too?'

"'No; not unless a master, from being a good master, becomes a cruel and a bad one. My father has always done and still does his duty to you; and it is not your province to resent my quarrels.'

"'But I can't help it; and we can none of us help it. Do you, can you require me, Miss Adelaide, to take the orders and obey that hateful——But I must not call names.'

"'Certainly not; especially as you are speaking of my father's wife. But now, Mansel, let me convince you that you may probably be the means of essentially serving my father, and of serving me by preventing his ruin, if you remain in the family; and I know that if any thing should be going materially wrong, on you I can depend for informing me of it, as a letter addressed to me at the Nunnery Boarding School, at York, will always reach me there.'

"'Well, my dear young lady,' said Mansel, 'if I can serve or oblige you by staying, stay I will.'

"'Thank you, my good old friend,' said I, wringing his hand as I spoke. 'And now farewell, beloved mother, and beloved children! and farewell to the abode of my ancestors!'

"Here my strength and my fortitude wholly forsook me, and I know not how I got into the carriage. It drove off unfelt by me; and when I recovered from my stupor of grief, I found myself some miles on my road, and leaning on the bosom of my weeping attendant.

"We reached London before dark, and drove immediately to my father's town-house, which he inherited from an uncle. It was in the parish of St. Giles's in the Fields, and the garden looked towards the river and the country beyond it.

"Gladly, methought, would I have been permitted to consider this residence as my home, because I should then have still been under the roof of a parent. But, alas! he was soon about to live in it for a time himself, and I had the misery of remembering that I was exiled from the paternal roof.

"My father had not desired me to write to him; but I was resolved not to act on this omission. I chose to think he wished to hear from me; and I sent word by the servant who drove me, that I should write to him as soon as I was arrived at York; that I should not remain in London longer than till I had received an answer from the convent, and had procured proper protection in my journey—protection which I was much mortified to think my father himself had not procured me. But I found, that in the flutter of my dismissal, he had really forgotten to do it; for one of his gardeners, a very steady, respectable man, was sent to see me safe to York, two days only after my arrival in London; and he informed me that my father and his family were likely to visit London directly.

"To delay, therefore, my journey, under my circumstances, was impossible. Yet I own I loved to linger on that spot where I knew Delaval was residing. However, being fearful of my own resolution, and knowing that the best virtue is to avoid temptation, I resolved to set off directly, lest I should yield to the strong desire which I felt to write to him, and let him know where I was, and all that had happened to me.

"I therefore tore myself from London as soon as I had heard from my friend and relation, and been assured of a welcome; and after a weary and difficult journey of many days, I arrived at York.

"How sweet—how soothing—how healing, is the voice of affection! It was now long since I had heard the voice of affection and interest, except from the menials; and my poor burthened heart seemed lightened of its sorrows, while my friend and relation listened to my tale, and wept over my situation. She called it weeping over my wrongs; but that I could not allow, as I could not bear to consider my father in any other light, than as one 'more sinned against than sinning;' and I always hoped, that however well the mask was fixed on the face of the foreigners, it would at last drop off, and that my father would forgive, and receive again his banished child. How often, how very often did the scenes of Lear and Cordelia occur to my memory! and always with a comforting power.

"In one respect, my relation and I could not agree. Delaval was her cousin as well as my mother's, and she loved him as he deserved. She, therefore, blinded, I think, by her partiality, could not admit, that under the new circumstances under which I was placed, I was bound to adhere so scrupulously to the promise which I had made; and she thought it a duty which I owed Delaval, to inform him, or cause him to be informed, of my father's marriage, of my banishment, and of my present residence.

"I agreed with her that he had a right to know all these things; but I did not think that I ought to be his informant. She, therefore, undertook to inform him herself.

"The consequence was—what I cannot say that I *feared*, but I expected—that Delaval immediately set off for York; and I was prevailed upon to see him, in the presence of the governess.

"At first he could only say, 'You in London, and so near me for several days, and I not know it!'

"Still he respected the principle on which I acted too much to reproach me with unkindness; and it was not long before he began on that subject on which I dreaded to listen to him.

"I must own the conflict in my mind was a terrible one. Delaval had lately had a considerable access of fortune; therefore he did not want my property; and knowing my father to be now an embarrassed man, he would willingly have purchased me of him by a surrender of my inheritance; and having done so, he wanted me to marry him immediately.

"But I persisted in my refusal. Could I

have believed that my father would have listened to Delaval's proposal, I should have gladly allowed him to make it; but I was sure that he would have rejected it with indignation, and as a personal affront. Besides, I knew that he had been taught to hate Delaval, and had hated him ever since he became, as he considered him, the calumniator of his idol. I, therefore, resisted all the pleadings of my lover; and, what was more difficult to resist, the pleadings of my own heart; and though I bound myself by a vow never to be any one's but his, I declared that his I would never be, while my father retained life and consciousness, *without his consent*. 'And at present,' said I, 'remember I am not of age, and cannot marry you if I would.'

"'True,' replied Delaval; 'but when you are of age, I shall renew my suit; for circumstances may alter your determination. And now,' said he, 'I have to tell you that I am under the necessity of setting off for Spain; part of the property left me is in that country, and I must go to claim it in person; but I shall return as soon as I possibly can, to be ready to take advantage of any change of prospects.'

"'To Spain!' I exclaimed, when I was able to break the spell which consternation had thrown over my utterance; 'To Spain! I cannot bear the thoughts of your going to that gloomy and superstitious country!'

"But Delaval laughed at my fears. However, before we took our last farewell, his spirits were as much depressed as my own, and our parting was as dolorous a one as if we had been conscious of what was to happen;—as if we had foreboded that we parted for—but I will not anticipate.

"Delaval sailed for Spain; and the governess received a letter from him, announcing his safe landing; and he promised to write again very soon.

"In the mean while, let us look back on my father and his new *ménage*. The old butler corresponded with Delaval's servant, who remained in London; and he gave a very sad account of the new order of things; all which letters Delaval desired his man to forward to me. From these letters—in which there was an evident struggle between the old man's wish to tell all he knew, and that respect for his master which urged him to be silent,—I learned that my father was in great want of money; that bills were constantly pouring in on all sides; that the new mistress of the house had considerably reduced the good living in the kitchen; that economy and retrenchment were there the order of the day; and that even in the higher departments, the table was now showily, but shabbily covered. And still my father saved no money, and was evidently distressed. Besides, the improvements in the gardens were all suspended—a gardener and his man dismissed; and my father's reason for allowing these retrenchments was, that his wife was likely to bring him a son and heir; and as he might have a large family, he did not know but what he should be obliged at last to let his estate. Still the good old man said his master complained of the expenses of house-keeping; 'And we all suspect,' added he, 'that madame is making a purse for herself.'

"These letters always contained abundance of regrets for my wrongs, and affectionate respect towards me; and as my father never answered my letters, though I wrote every month, I was really glad to receive even this information how he was, and what his prospects were.

"Still I could not quite approve this channel of information; and I was hesitating whether I should forbid it or not, when a more proper one was opened to me. A nephew of my friend, the governess, made acquaintance with young Desborough, the husband of Adrienne; and from his letters to his aunt I heard details, which, from such a quarter, I had no scruple in receiving.

"I learnt that my father had appeared before the accouchment the most attentive, most devoted and passionate of lover-husbands; and that when at length his Angelique presented him with a son and heir, his transports of joy and gratitude were unbounded.

"'I have then once more a brother!' I exclaimed, as the governess read so far; and my heart throbbed with agony at the idea that I might never behold him. He also said that Angelique recovered from her confinement more beautiful than ever; and that conceiving her power now, by the birth of a son, too securely fixed to be ever overthrown, she had usurped sovereign sway, and thrown off much of that appearance of gentle sweetness which had at first made her so captivating; and one exertion of her power was to prevail on my father to dismiss the old butler, the only remaining old servant; 'who was,' she said, 'she doubted not, a spy on their actions, and who was a decided obstacle in the way of the necessary retrenchments.'

"This last reason was a conclusive one with my father. Besides, I suspect he was not sorry to get rid of the last memento of things as they *had* been; and of, no doubt, a disapproving witness of things as they *were*. The poor old man, therefore, was discharged as incapable of the necessary service, on his recovery from a severe illness; during which he had been heard only too frequently to say, 'Oh! if poor Miss Adelaide had been here still, I should have had such care taken of me!—such nice things she would have sent me!—ay, and given me too with her own dear hand!'

"These things were repeated to Angelique, who, clenching her fist, declared, in the presence of Desborough and her daughter, that

she would send the old dotard after his dear Miss Adelaide.

"Faithful to her design of getting all she could, and saving all she could, Angelique now resolved that her house should no longer be even the temporary resort of Desborough and Adrienne. And, on pretence of wanting advice for her little boy, Angelique prepared for a visit of a few weeks to London; and on the plea of the London house not being large enough to accommodate them and their family, (for Adrienne also was a mother,) she got rid of them entirely as resident guests; for when my father and she returned into Surrey, they gave the young couple no invitation to repeat their visit.

"To dinner, however, they sometimes invited them before they left town; and Desborough once witnessed a scene there which gave me hopes of my father's ultimate emancipation from her thraldom. My father was a man who could be easily persuaded, where he loved and thought he was beloved; but no one could ever force him to compliance;—and he was sure to resist where he saw that he was expected to obey. But Angelique was not aware of this trait in his disposition till she put it to the proof.

"There was one day a great party to dinner at my father's; and Agelique (who was going to a fine ball afterwards with Desborough and Adrienne,) appeared at table in the family diamonds which my mother used to wear, and which I wore when full-dressed, as there was no eldest son to claim them for his wife. After dinner one of the ear-rings became unfastened, and the consciously beautiful wife tripped gracefully up to my father, and leaning her cheek towards him, while in all the pride of power she leaned her white arm on his shoulder, desired him to fasten it. He complied, admiring it as he did so, and calling on the persons near him to admire the brilliancy of the jewels, and how well they became the wearer; while Angelique still remained leaning on his shoulder, his arm encircling her waist, and he looking up in her face with speaking admiration.

"'The jewels themselves are very well,' replied Angelique, coolly; 'but the setting is odious, old-fashioned, and hideous; I must have them new-set, *mon petit bon homme!* Indeed, to say the truth, I have already looked at, and chosen a new pattern.'

"'How! Angelique,' cried my father, colouring violently at this assumption of authority, to which, in a wife, he had never been accustomed; 'have I not told you, over and over again, that I will not have the jewels new-set? If it were only on account of the expense, I would not hear of such a thing.'

"'Oh! but by selling some of the jewels, those of least value, we could defray the whole expense.

"'Come, come, *petit bon homme*,' said she, playfully tapping his cheek, 'you know you will consent at last; to be sure I expect you to make a noise, and a few wry faces at first; but you know you must comply at last, for I am commanding officer.'

"During this time, Desborough said, my father's countenance exhibited an appearance of indignant astonishment; while it was evident that both his silence and his endurance of her almost contemptuous caresses, were the result of perturbed surprise. At length, however, he recovered his self-possession; and shaking off her arm, as he rose with an air of offended dignity off his seat, he said, 'I admit of no commanding officer in this house, madam, but myself. The jewels of which you speak so contemptuously are family jewels, and go by law to my eldest son; and I have no right to sell or alienate one of them. I have only to add, madam, that the jewels which the honourable Mrs. Falkland, my first wife, and Miss Falkland, her daughter and mine, thought handsome enough for them, I think so for my second wife, the widow of Monsieur du Vernis.'

"He then left the room, begging his guests to excuse him for a short time, leaving Angelique humbled and thunder-struck, spite of her usual strength of nerve.

"'I was not, I believe,' said Desborough, 'the only one who enjoyed her discomfiture.'

"She had been induced by her vanity to show her absolute power over my father; and he by whom such an exposition could never be tolerated, and had never been expected, resented the affront in a manner worthy of him, but wholly unlooked for by her; and it overcame her so much, that she was forced to allow her brother to lead her out of the room, whither my father soon returned; but he took no notice of her absence.

"Not long after, it seems, Desborough, whose head ached, went to walk in the garden behind the house; and taking the path that led behind the summer-house, he heard Angelique and Merinville in high debate; nor could he, however unworthy he owned the action to be, forbear to listen.

"'I tell you, Angelique,' said Merinville, 'your silly vanity has given a blow to your power which you may never recover.'

"'Absurd! the old fellow will be glad enough to make it up with me; after one fit, and a proper number of tears, he will be my own again. You pretend to teach me to manage a man, indeed!'

"'Yes, *this* man I do; because I see you have mistaken his character. He is proud and positive. In undervaluing his jewels, and talking of selling some of them, you wounded his family pride; and in pretending to have them set, spite of his prohibition, you offended against his authority, which has never been disputed, I dare say, before, ever since he was born. Was it not because she wished to thwart

his views, and disputed his will, that he banished his daughter? Had she not seemed to defy him, by affronting you, he would never have sent her away. Have as many fits and shed as many tears as you please to conciliate your husband; but be reconciled, I beg, without conditions: if you condition to have the jewels new-set, your power is gone for ever. I wish you to succeed, because we could get our jeweller friend to change some of them for paste, which would be the making of us;—but I see we must give up the design.'

"Angelique had a fit, and my father was alarmed, and forgave her.

"They went to the ball, and all was harmony again. But a day or two after, Angelique, whose vanity was piqued, to prove to her brother that he had undervalued her powers, began again concerning the jewels, in the presence of Desborough.

'"You look ill, Angelique,' said my father.

"'No wonder,' she replied, in a plaintive tone; 'no wonder—I have not slept since the night of the ball. I am perpetually haunted by images that can never be realized, and wishes which can never be gratified.'

"'Indeed! the latter position cannot be true, if it be in my power to gratify them.'

"It is; and you refuse,' said she in a tearful voice; 'and in my present situation I do not know what the consequence may be.'

"'Angelique, dearest Angelique!' said my father, 'if your request is reasonable, and I can indulge it, I will; for precious to my soul are the hopes you now hold out to me.'

"'No, no; more precious far is the obstinate resolution to keep the jewels as they are.'

"'The jewels again!' cried my father.

"'Yes, cruel man! and again and again; the new-setting which I chose, and they haunt me and fever me; but still, no doubt, they will remain unset.'

"'They will, madam,' replied my father, darting at her a look of angry scorn, and, as Desborough fancied, of suspicion; 'They will, madam, spite of the implied *longings* of a whimsical woman.' Then suddenly rising, he left the room.

"Angelique being thus again completely foiled, began to think her brother was right, and resolved to make no more attempts; but she chose to have a short illness, or to feign one, in consequence of the denial.

"'But is it not very wrong, and very ill-judged,' continued Desborough to Saumerive, (the nephew of the abbess,) 'in Miss Falkland not to write to her father? He wonders at her silence, and is highly indignant at it; and he will not, I am sure, forgive her, while she does not seem to wish to be forgiven. And now, too, that the little boy is not likely to live, she had better try to resume her claims.'

"This part of the letter filled me with excessive indignation; for it proved to me that my letters had all been intercepted; and the idea that my father thought me guilty of undutiful resentment and neglect, was sufficiently painful to counteract the hope now held out to me, that my father would in time be, at least in a salutary degree, detached from this dangerous woman. She, however, I still hoped, when she had obtained all she could from my father, would be claimed by her husband, who would come and assure my father that the story of his death was a fabrication of his own for private purposes.

"It was now, therefore, my duty to contrive to get a letter securely into my father's hand, if possible. But before I could fix on the means, news arrived that my little brother was dead, and my father in deep affliction.

"This intelligence made it necessary for me to alter my style of writing, and address him in the language of condolence; but it also made it more binding on me to write as soon as possible; and I hoped I had found a certain means of conveyance, when news arrived from Spain, which banished from my nearly overthrown mind, every thought but of my own loss, and my own everwhelming misery. Even to this hour I shudder at the recollection of those moments.

"A friend residing in Spain, wrote to inform the governess, that Delaval, having spoken too freely against the power of the Inquisition, had been seized and thrown into its prisons. With this came another letter, written a short time after, and in great agitation, stating, that since writing the above, certain intelligence had reached him, that Delaval after enduring great tortures, at the expiration of only one week from the time of his imprisonment, had died in prison.

"The receipt of these terrible letters, which she received in the refectory, from which a bad headache kept me that day, affected the governess so much, that she was forced to be conveyed to her room; and when the news of her illness reached me, and I heard that it was occasioned by letters from Spain, I flew to her apartment; and before she could prevent it, I read the overwhelming intelligence. But let me not dwell on those hours of woe; yet even now I recall them in all their first force, nor can I ever cease to remember them but in the complete oblivion of the grave! In vain did I persist to hope, in vain cause repeated inquiries to be made into the truth of the intelligence. Every fresh account confirmed it, and I at length was convinced of my loss.

"What was the world, what was life itself to me now? Though I rarely saw Delaval, and though I might never be his; yet I knew that he existed, and I knew that he existed for me.

"He was to me next to that unseen and all pervading Being, of whose existence, though he is invisible, it is a comfort and a support to be convinced, and on whom we rely with con-

fidence in all times of difficulty and danger. In all my afflictions, I looked up to my unseen Creator as my hope and my comfort, my sure though unseen friend; and then with confiding love I looked towards the distant Delaval as my earthly friend, on whose love and sympathy I could for ever rely. But now he was no more! he was gone to my heavenly friend and comforter,—and earnestly, how earnestly, did I pray to follow him!

"Months followed of such depression, that my amiable friend feared for my health, after having only just ceased to fear for my reason; and to heal my mind, she endeavoured to awake in me a wish to leave the world, and join a sisterhood of nuns abroad. And disgust to that world in which I had known nothing but anguish and mortification, through the means of my best feelings, would perhaps have led me to accede to her proposal; especially as I was now of age, and, having received my fortune, could have paid handsomely for my admission, had not the hope still haunted me, that I might yet be serviceable to my beloved father; and while that tie to life and to the world remained, I was resolved to remain at liberty to hasten wherever my duty called me.

"My father, though I knew it not, as soon as he found that his expenses were exceeding his income, put it out of his power to be tempted to use my fortune, by securing it in the hands of trustees; and from them I received it just before the news from Spain arrived, and when I was incapable of attending to business. As soon as I learnt this circumstance, it is not to be doubted, but that I rejoiced in this trait so worthy of my father, and that I was the more eager to remain unfettered for his sake.

"The time for writing to him on the death of his child was now gone by; but still I resolved to write, as soon as I had learnt, through the means of Mr. Saumerive, where he then was, and what was the state of his affairs. The account I received was such as to fill me not only with excessive fears for his health and safety, but also with hope for myself, as I thought the hour rapidly approaching when he might need the aid of his long-exiled child; and like another Lear, deserted and forlorn, might want the help of his poor child Cordelia.

"Saumerive learnt, through Desborough, that my father's embarrassments were such that he had been obliged to offer his estate for sale, dismiss the greater part of his servants, and reside at his London house; that Angelique, with her child, lost great part of her hold on the affections of my father, especially as, having now nearly gained all she could from his indulgence and his carelessness, she had thrown off the mask, and that constant quarrels had succeeded to their former tenderness; nay, that once she had been provoked to threaten my father, that she would be revenged on him. It seems, that having no longer any motive to spare my father, her brother and herself resumed their office of spy; and having taken care to let their employers know that Du Vernis was, they found, alive; and that, therefore, as Angelique's marriage with my father was void, it was not a husband whom she was betraying, they advised the government to send down, as a friend of theirs, one of their agents, before whom they would lead my father to utter such things as *must* justify his being taken up and confined, even *au secret*, without the power of redress or liberation; for then that blessed guardian of the liberty of the subject, the habeas corpus act, did not exist in all its force as it does now, and I might never have known where to seek the injured parent whom I had lost. But government did not act upon this hint, (though my father grew every day more obnoxious to them through the intemperance of his language, and his association with the disaffected,) till he took up his abode in London; and then Merinville introduced at his now frugal table one of the spies of the ministers.

"But a still more dreadful visitation was hanging over London and its inhabitants, than the system of *espionage;* for THE PLAGUE again broke out in the northern part of the city, and death was watching for its crowds of victims.

"The first news of it reached me in November, 1664; but as only two persons died of it then, and those not near the abode of my father, I flattered myself that the contagion would not spread; and I remained contentedly at York, though the distance was such, that, had there been any reason to apprehend an increase of this horrible scourge, I could not have borne to be where days must elapse before I could learn tidings of my endangered parent. But when, in the February of 1665, there was reason to apprehend that it had burst out with increased violence, I could no longer bear to remain at a distance from the scene where I knew my poor father to be, and exposed to such danger—such varied danger, too—and I resolved to set off immediately for the vicinity of the metropolis.

"Nor could my kind relation oppose my acting on the impulse of filial duty, though she fervently begged me to remember, that I must not expose my own life needlessly, and that, till absolutely wanted, I ought not to venture into the scene of death. She then wept over me, and prayed for me; she also tied a holy relic round my neck; insisted on binding an amulet round my arm; and then, with a look and a gesture which I shall never forget, so expressive was the one, and so graceful the other, commended me to the care of Providence.

"But how poor, spite of her praises, my own intended self-devotion appeared to myself!—What was there in life now left to charm me! To save the life of my father by my exertions,

even at the risk of my own, was now the only cheering prospect before me; or to die with him, the highest object of my ambition. What sacrifice then was I making? And as the virtue of an action like this depends on the weight of the cross one takes up, and the blessings one resigns, my Christian humility was in no danger from the praises of the governess, and I wandered forth, judging of my intended exertions more soberly than she did. I was accompanied by my maid, and an old priest, who was going into the neighbourhood of the metropolis, and I took up my abode within ten miles of the visited city. It was now the month of May, and even then the appearance of the roads was painfully appalling.

"The noble, the rich, the young, the old, were seen thronging in all directions, anxious to escape from the burning breath of contagion. 'Nothing was to be seen but wagons and carts with goods, women, servants, and children, and coaches filled with people of the better sort, and horsemen attending them, and all hurrying away. Then empty wagons and carts appeared, and spare horses with servants, who, it was apparent, were returning, or sent from the country to fetch more people; besides innumerable men on horseback. Some alone, others with servants, and all evidently fitted out for travelling.'* But oh! to see the mournful expression of some of these poor fugitives! Some seemed, by their pale cheek, their purple lip, and their heavy eye, to carry with them, unconsciously, the disorder from which they fled; others were continually looking back as they drove rapidly along, as if they had left what they most loved behind, and regretted their selfish flight. Some were wringing their hands and wailing in loud lament, as if they had lost all that made life valuable, and were carried away by force to save an existence of which they were weary; and all these appearances seemed to prove, so unequivocally, the terrible and triumphant dominion of this awful scourge, that when the poor priest and I parted, he felt a firm conviction that he should see me no more but in another world; and his parting benediction was so solemn, so sad, and so impressive, that it still seems to sound in my ears.

"I took up my abode at an inn, where fugitives usually stopped, by which means I could obtain information from the city, and learn where the contagion raged the most. In the mean while, I wrote down the best method of treating it, which I had been taught by two medical men at York, who had lived in countries visited by the plague, with the best means to prevent infection; and learning that Southwark was as yet an uninfected part of the town, I removed thither, and hired a lodging at a small house on the banks of the Thames.

"Here I learnt a deplorable account indeed, from groups of persons in the streets, not only of the ravages which the plague was making, but also of the cruelties practised, for the love of gain and pillage, by the nurses, the watchmen, and others, on the helpless and dying victims; and when I reflected with what unprincipled and rapacious beings my father was connected, I dreaded lest, if the plague should attack, and even spare him, the work of death might be performed by less merciful influence.

"It now remained for me to learn whether my father had fled the city, and I was resolved to go at nightfall, and reconnoitre the ground myself; but I chose to go to the house alone, as I felt that I had no right to expose any life but my own; and I commanded my weeping maid to remain at the lodging.

"I now had the misery to hear that the plague raged most violently in the parish of St. Giles's, and in the street where my father lived; therefore, I instantly hired a horse and cart, and a man to drive me, and set off on my journey. It was some miles from Southwark to St. Giles's, and all the way I went the roads were thronged with fugitives from the infected regions. The poor beast that dragged us seemed to suffer under the fatal calm and fairness of the weather; for no wind refreshed the fervid air, no drop of rain moistened the dry earth, and refreshed, with its reviving dew, the weary traveller and the slow-pacing horse. At length we reached an inn not far from the fatal place to which we were hastening; but which, standing in an insulated situation, and cut off from any communication with other buildings, seemed as healthy a place as could be found at such a time of insecurity.

"Here I resolved to stop and bait the horse; and I walked out in the mean while to procure from some shops, which I saw across the field, the medicines, the cordials, the food, and other things for household use, which I thought I might want; I also procured changes of apparel for myself. On entering the room appropriated to me in the inn, which was on the first floor, I found my driver waiting for me; and concluding he was going to tell me he had gained some new and important information, I said in rather a loud voice, 'Well, my good man! make haste, what have you to tell me!'

"I had scarcely said these words, when I heard an exclamation from the next room of 'Merciful father! what voice is that? It is, it must be Miss Adelaide her own self!'

"I waited to hear no more, for I was sure it was the poor old butler; and rushing into the next room I found it was he indeed; but sitting up in an arm-chair supported by pillows, and seeming as if his last hour was approaching. What our meeting was, and what our greetings, I will not stop to describe; suffice, that I obtained from him the most important information. He told me that Merinville and Angelique had only just left the inn where we

* Daniel de Foe's History of the Plague.

were, they having halted there to send off some of their packages to the nearest wharf; that they had slept at the inn the night before, and had sat in the room which I occupied; that he had overheard them speak, and recognised their voices as he had mine; and that, having been forced to share their room with two French gentlemen, they had, luckily for him, been obliged to talk confidentially in English; — he had, therefore, heard all they said. And Angelique, who had come alone, or with only servants, to the inn, where Merinville had met her, told Merinville that she had informed my father she had discovered her husband was living, and that on his being seized with symptoms of the plague, she had assured him she felt it was her duty now to go, and not stay to nurse him; and that she had taken advantage of his excessive weakness, and inability to move, to make prize of all the money, plate, and such of the furniture and linen as she could remove, the servants not interfering, as they believed she was still their mistress, and was only moving them to a place of greater security. 'And what,' asked Merinville, 'became then of the arrest of Falkland, which was to have taken place that night?'

"'O! I told the officers Falkland was ill of the plague, and they fled with precipitation. The servants too left the house—all but two of them, and I also went away as fast as I could; but telling the servants I meant to return as soon as I had deposited the things in a place of safety; — that done, I said I would return with advice, and see if their master could not be removed.'

"'Well, but I hope,' said Merinville, 'you did not forget to bring with you the casket of jewels, which the old fellow never would let out of his own custody, since he found you had such a mind to them.'

"'I protest,' said Angelique, 'I forgot it; besides, they are in the closet in his chamber, with a brace of loaded pistols lying on the bed, which I dare not touch; and weak as he was, he would have seized me, and, perhaps, held a pistol to my head, had I offered to take them.'

"'Fool!' replied Merinville, 'do you think I will sail without them?'

"'You must,' she replied; 'for now contagion and death guard them from you, and life is certainly not worth risking, even for jewels like these.'

"Here the conversation ended; and here ended the good old man's story, to which I listened with alternate wretchedness and despair, and with hope and confidence.

"'Well, then, I have no time to lose,' cried I starting up. 'Cruel woman! to leave him to perish!'

"But when I told old Mansel my errand, and what I was there for, I thought that his contending emotions would have killed him; for fear for me combated his joy at knowing that my going might save his master. But he knew my resolution was not to be moved, and he could only pray for me, and pray that he might live to see me return in safety, and his master recovering.

"I now only waited to borrow of the good old man all the changes of linen which he could spare, and a coat; I bought one also of the landlord, and sheets and blankets; but he distressed me much by saying that he was sure that I should not gain admittance to my father. While packing up these things, I was teased by poor Mansel's regrets that his linen was so coarse; and by his expressions of modest shame, that ever his master should wear clothes or linen of his.

"'But remember,' cried I, almost pettishly, 'this horrid woman has probably taken away all his clothes and linen; and this, even were it coarser, would be a refreshment to him.'

"I had time to inquire into his own little history, while packing up for my departure, and I learned that the good old man had been thus far on his way, meaning to come to York, and end his days near me, but that he had been unable to proceed; and that as the landlord and his wife were kind to him, there he should remain, and await my return, or some message from me. 'If, after a certain time, neither you nor message come, I shall have lived only too long,' added he, bursting into tears, 'and then I shall pray to be released directly.'

"I wrung his hand in silence, for I could not speak, and rose to depart, when we heard voices in the next room, one of which spoke in an angry tone, the other in the touching accents of lamentation. The latter was a female voice—and never can I forget the words which it uttered.

"'Let me go back, my brother! let me go back to our poor father! O that I had never been prevailed upon to leave him!'

"'Stuff! nonsense! sentimental nonsense!' replied the other; 'What good could you do for him? You know that he must die; and if you stayed, you might have died too. You ought to thank me for having forced you away.'

"'No, never can I. It would have been better for me to have died in the performance of my duty, than live in torture, and die by inches from remorse for having neglected it. I tell you, George,' she added, with the very yell of utter despair, 'I shall never, never be happy again!'

"What support, what comfort, must this dreadful dialogue have been to me! I received it on my knees in heartfelt thankfulness. 'No,' said I to myself, 'the duties are never, never to be violated with impunity.'

"It seemed indeed that my overhearing this scene was providential; as an express sent by my faithful servant now arrived at the inn

door, and desired the parcel he brought to be given to me instantly.

"I opened it with trembling impatience. On the address was—'To be sent after her *immediately*, with all possible haste, wherever she is.' And on the envelope was written, in my relation's hand, 'You have borne affliction well, my child. I pray that you may be enabled to bear unexpected joy as well.' I then opened the letter, and found that Delaval was alive, was well, was in England, and then within three days' journey of York!!!

"I cannot describe my first emotions; but they certainly were those of unmixed joy and thankfulness. He lived!—and I might now look forward indeed to being his! And his letter to the governess, but meant for me, breathed nothing but love, hope, and unabated confidence.

"But when I recollected my father, and remembered that I was going probably to my death; and going to wring so cruelly the heart that had loved me, unlike my father's, with unabated tenderness, my resolution failed, and I resolved to fly to my lover; and not go, from the forlorn hope of saving him who might not be capable of being saved, to risk, perhaps to lose my own life, and destroy the happiness of a most exemplary being. But at this moment of struggling and fainting virtue, I recollected the terrible breathings of remorse which I had just heard, and clasping my hands together, I murmured out, 'I thank thee, gracious preserver! Not in vain was this warning sent, and I go to my duty!'

"I then wrote a few hurried lines to the governess, conjuring her not to tell Delaval whither I was gone, or why; but simply to assure him that in life and in death he would ever be the dearest object of my thoughts and of my prayers; and that I trusted, a love so pure and faithful as ours, would be renewed in another and a better world.

"This letter was not sealed, so eager was I to send it, and to set off on my sad journey; and I desired the express to go with it as far as he could himself, and send it on by expresses all the way. It so happened that the man was an old servant of Delaval's; and he was so overjoyed to hear his master still lived, that had I asked him to walk with it to York, he would no doubt have at that moment thought himself equal to the undertaking.

"The hour of my setting off was now really arrived; and followed by the prayers of Mansel and the good people of the house, I got into my well-loaded cart, and proceeded on my way. Walking on the road, and supported by a fierce-looking young man, I saw a pale, miserable, wild-looking young woman; and in her mournful tone, as I drew near her, I recognised the child who had deserted her sick father. Oh! how my heart beat with renewed thankfulness as I said within myself, 'But I am going to mine!'

"As I drove through some of the streets, on my way, London seemed scarcely to resemble its former self. All houses were shut up; red crosses were on the doors, with the inscription of 'Lord have mercy upon us!' The streets were deserted; and grass growing amidst the stones, proved how long a period had elapsed since the foot of busy man had habitually trodden there; while men in office passed slowly and singly along, bearing a red wand in their hands, to mark that it might be dangerous to approach them; and the cries from the windows of 'Pray for us!' and the dismal call of 'Bring out your dead!' mingled dreadfully and appallingly with the rumbling sound of the approaching death-carts, and the deep tolling of the bell for that last mournful ceremony, which was now bereft, by haste and fear, of all its impressive and sadly soothing solemnity.

"Oh! how I shuddered as the first pest-cart passed, as night was now rapidly spreading around me. 'How do I know,' thought I, 'whom that cart of varied victims may not contain!' The thought was too terrible, and I conjured my driver to quicken the pace of his horse.

"He did so; and as St. Giles's church struck nine, we reached the street in which stood the house of my father. That house was the last in the row; and to avoid observation, I desired the man to wait with his cart in a little alley at the gable-end of the house, while I, with trembling feet, walked to the door, on which I beheld the portentous red cross, and its accompanying prayer.

"As I expected, a watchman guarded the door; and I knew that he would refuse to admit me, as he was bound so to do, on pain of the severest penalty. Still I hoped to succeed in my application, if my father yet lived; but I resolved not to offer him a bribe of money till I found all other applications hopeless; for I thought, if he were one of the wicked watchmen of whom I had heard, he might murder me as well as my father for the sake of the money I had about me.

"We had a lighted dark-lantern with us in the cart, and with this in my hand I went up to my father's door. My dress was the deepest mourning, and I wore a sort of long white veil, resembling the veil of a novice. I did this, in hopes that I might thus be able to conceal myself from my father's knowledge, if he was quite sensible, as I feared the sight of me might overcome him too much; and I also hoped that he might fancy me some member of a religious order, who had undertaken to nurse the sick.

"But as this dress was singular, and as my figure was tall and thin, I was not surprised that the watchman started and crossed himself as I approached. However this was, the momentary fear I caused was the means of my obtaining one useful piece of information. I

found this watchman was a catholic; and I hoped he would be the more willing to oblige me when he heard I was of his own faith.

"It is wonderful, now that I was at my poor father's door and able by one question to remove my anxiety, I could not utter a word, and stood silent and motionless, as if I had really been the unearthly thing he took me for at first. At length, however, in a faint voice, I said, 'Is not this Mr. Falkland's house?'

"'It is.'

"'Does he yet live?' I asked in a trembling tone; and as I did so, I turned the lantern towards me, and the light fell upon my agitated countenance.

"The watchman instantly answered, 'I cannot tell; but I hope, nay, I think, he does.'

"And my convulsive 'Thank God!' was not heard by him without sympathy; for his tone was tremulous as he added, 'But I fear there is little hope for him. One of his servants is dead and buried; and as I have heard nothing of the other, I fear she is dead too; and I know the doctor, who is dead himself since, had little hope of him.'

"'But he is not yet dead, you think?'

"'I do think so.'

"'Then I conjure you to let me see him directly. I bring medicines, cordials, every thing; and I am come hundreds of miles in the hope, if he was ill, that I might be able to save him.'

"'I cannot—I dare not—it is—it is indeed impossible.'

"'No; not if you can feel for me and my anxiety. Hear me, I conjure you,' cried I. 'By this cross, (showing him one I had in my bosom) I conjure you, by this symbol of our mutual faith (for you I see are a catholic,) open that forbidden door, and let me hasten to see and to save my father!'

"'Your father! Mr. Falkland your father! Poor thing! poor thing! I have a mother myself, whom I would not lose for any thing; and I can feel for you. Go in, and the blessing of God go with you!'

"The door opened, and with difficulty, for something opposed the opening; and I felt very sick when I discovered that it was the body of the poor maid servant. But I struggled with this feeling; and while the watchman went out to call the dead-cart, whose awful rumbling was heard in the street at a distance, I tottered up to the chamber of my father.

"With a trembling hand I opened the door of the dark and suffocating room, and anxiously listened to hear whether he breathed or not. He did breathe audibly; he also moved audibly in his bed. Life, therefore, was not extinct; and with renewed thankfulness and hope I returned on the light step of gladness to the door, and told the watchman where to find my coach, and to bring me instantly a large basket which it contained. He did so, before the death-cart was at all near the door; but till it had driven off again with its load, he begged me to take care I was not seen.

"I now (seated in a chair at the extremity of the room, for I dared not yet look at my father) unpacked my basket, lighted a taper at the light of my lantern, and with a cordial medicine in one hand, and the candle in the other, I approached the bedside, and gently undrew the curtain. But when I gazed upon that beloved face, and saw it so changed, so indicative of disease and death, I turned away, and even groaned aloud. The sound seemed to arouse him, and I dropped my veil. But seeing, alas! that though he looked, he saw not, I turned it up again; and feeling the faint and rapid pulse, I resolved to get down the cordial as fast as possible.

"The poor invalid made no resistance, so my task was easy; and I got down quite as much as my instructer would, I thought, have recommended. I ventured next to open the window; and as there was a thorough light, I was able to make a thorough air; and soon by that means, and the burning of herbs and of some gums which I had with me, the smell of disease and the feeling of suffocating heat disappeared considerably; and when I had changed the pillow-case, I fancied that my father lay his head down in the cool and clean linen with a feeling of relief. But his apparent quiet did not last long. He again became restless, and delirium succeeded; his cheek became more flushed, and he talked incessantly; and sometimes with uncontrollable emotion I heard him pronounce my own name; and 'My child!' 'My poor Adele!' and sometimes 'Vile, unfeeling woman!' and 'Go to your husband then, go!' were distinctly uttered.

"It was now, I thought, the time for administering the medicine recommended to me, and I did so; for any thing of liquid, poor soul! seemed to be welcome to his parched lips; and even sooner than I expected, the restlessness of fever subsided, and he fell asleep.

"It would be absurd to say that this night was to me a night of happiness, because my anxiety was still as great as my hopes; and I knew not but that I myself was at that moment inhaling contagion and certain death. Still, when I found myself once more in the presence of that parent, whom even in his estrangement from me I had ever tenderly loved and truly honoured, when I thought that by my timely presence I should be permitted to save his life, and hear him name me ere long not only his beloved child, but his preserver, my heart was filled, nay, was choked, with emotions of the most pleasurable kind; and I declare that I have experienced far less lively sensations of enjoyment, when I have since worn away the night in the gay scenes of a court ball, and glittered in the royal circle, in the rank and splendour of a countess.

"A little before six, my friend, the watch-

man, who was then going off his watch, knocked at the door to know how my patient was; and he roused me from a most painful contemplation; for as the yellow beams of morning light shone through the white curtains, on my poor father's face, which was now no longer flushed with the crimson of fever, I was again so shocked and terrified with his wan and death-like appearance, that I hung over him with suspended breath, expecting every instant to see him breathe his last before me. I could hardly, therefore, speak when I opened the door to my kind inquirer; who, alarmed at my look, went up to the bed, regardless of the danger, and gazed closely and earnestly on the unconscious invalid.

"'He is not dying, nor like to die, dear young lady,' said he, 'if that is what you fear; for there is a gentle dew on his skin, which I have heard say is favourable; and those who die in the plague usually die in agony and raving.'

"'Thank you!—thank you!' I exclaimed, or rather sobbed out; 'but O, how long will it seem to me till I see you again! But come away, now—I can't let you stay, for fear you should catch the infection.'

"'I shall be here,' said he, 'as St. Giles's clock strikes ten; and till then, God bless you; but let me beg of you not to let the day-watch, who is rather a queer body, get a peep at you. I will tell him all is going on well above stairs; that he need make no inquiries, for that there is nothing wanted.'

"He then went away. But his assurances that my father was better had a most cheering effect on me; and I hoped that I might find the day, uncheered by the voice of kindness and of sympathy, less long than I feared.

"As my father still slept, I resolved to leave the door open, that I might hear if he stirred or spoke, and then explore the other rooms, to see if I could not get him moved into another apartment, and on a clean bed. But first I changed my own dress from black to white; not only because I heard that the black dye retained contagion longest, but that I thought my black dress, if my father could distinguish objects at all, would make him know that I was not the servant who had waited on him before. I next opened all the windows at the back of the house; and as the spare chamber opposite my father's had windows which opened on the garden and the fields, and as the bed wanted nothing but sheets, I resolved to move my father thither, as soon as I could do it with safety; and then, by locking up the infected rooms, after having opened the windows and lighted a fire in them, I hoped to prevent the infection from spreading by our means. For myself, I had no fear, and therefore I believed I was in no danger; and this conviction helped, no doubt, to preserve me.

"I soon discovered which was the room of the poor maid-servant; and having deluged it first with some of the pails of water which the good watchman had fetched me in before he went away, I set open the windows, and lighted a fire in it. And in doing this, in sheeting the bed, in unpacking and arranging my things, and above all, in administering to the wants of my still unconscious invalid, I felt the day pass with tolerable rapidity. Eat, I could not; but a little wine and a morsel of bread were sufficient to sustain me during a time of such excitement.

"At about nine o'clock, and when I was thinking with pleasant anticipation of the return of my humble friend as soon as I should hear the next clock strike, my father, whose pulse was now considerably fuller and much reduced, awoke from his sleep and called, 'Martha,' in a much stronger and clearer tone than he had yet spoken; and while every fibre trembled with hope and with emotion, I let down my veil, and in a whisper said, 'Here I am, sir.'

"'Poor girl!' said my father, 'I am glad to hear it; for I feared you were gone and left me, like everybody else. But no—I recollect—I feared you were dead, too. You have been very ill, have you not?'

"'Yes, sir, very, (still whispering;) but I am got well, though I have lost my voice; and so will you get well, sir.'

"'No, Martha, no; nor do I wish it. What should I live for? I have nobody to love me now—no one—no one.' Then heaving a deep sigh, he hid his face in the pillow;—but starting up again, he said, 'But, Martha, how is this? The pillow seems fresher, and the air cooler and sweeter; and I believe you gave me many refreshing things in the night; and yes, I really do think I am better. But did you do this, Martha? To be sure—No, no—it could not be Angelique; was it not you, Martha?'

"'It was I, sir,' I replied, nearly inarticulate with emotion.

"'And I should like something more to take immediately.'

"Having taken the precaution to put on my gloves, lest he should see the hand was not that of a servant, I gave him some wine and some bread dipped in it; and it was with great joy that I saw he ate it without difficulty and with evident pleasure.

"'Then it is not a delusion!' said I to myself; 'and he will recover.'

"He now, while begging me to shake up his pillow for him, which I sprinkled with sweet refreshing water, looked earnestly at me, and asked me if my eyes were weak, that I wore a veil.

"I answered 'yes; but that I ought to be thankful to have my life spared, even with the loss of my voice and my sight.'

"'To be sure you ought; and I ought to be thankful, even if forced to live without any tie or comfort in the world; for the comforts I

once had, my own folly has deprived me of. Well, I have something to say to you, Martha, if I should not recover; — but not now, I have talked too much.' And then, exhausted, but calmly, he fell asleep.

"Ten o'clock at length struck; and I heard the hall door unlock, and very soon a tap at the chamber door announced my kind visitant.

"'How do you go on?' said he. And the good creature seemed delighted at my account.

"'How is your mother?' I inquired.

"'She holds well—quite well; but I take care to pull off my coat before I go home, lest it should be dangerous. I assure you, Miss, you have my mother's prayers, as well as mine; and she says she should like to see you.'

"My father now moved, and my humble friend retired.

"'Martha,' said my father, 'whose voice was that?'

"'The watchman's, sir; he is so kind and attentive, when you get well, sir, you must reward him handsomely.'

"I! I reward him, child! My folly and extravagance have left me not the power to do it; but I know there is one who will do it, and can do it, thank heaven! Martha, you too are very good, and she would reward *you*, if she knew it.'

"'Who would, sir?'

"'Who! why my daughter, to be sure.'

"Here he again heaved a deep sigh, and fell asleep.

"He awoke about three hours after; and I found by his voice that his strength was much renewed.

"'Martha,' said he, 'what was I saying when I fell asleep?—Oh!—I remember now; —I said my child would reward you. Yes, and I am sure she will;—for though it was very unkind in her never to write to me during all this time, still I am sure she will forgive and forget all when I am dead.'

"An almost convulsive sob now burst from me, spite of myself, and startled him excessively.

"'Why, Martha,' said he, 'what ails you?'

"'Your—your talking of dying, sir; I can't bear it.'

"'Good, kind girl!' said he. 'How strange it is now, that this creature, whom I have not known long, should feel for—and stay with me —and nurse me, when those who—Pshaw! I must not think that way—However, Martha, I am glad, very glad, that you have had this malady, as it can't do you any harm to nurse me. I could not bear to make victims. Yes, and that reconciles me to the absence of my poor Adele; I should have been so afraid of her catching the fever! Now, thank God! she is hundreds of miles off, and in no danger; and now she will hear nothing of it till it is all over, and I am gone, and she can do nothing for me.'

"'Do you then think, if she had known of your danger, she would have come?'

"'Yes, I do believe she would; and sometimes I suspect she has written, and that the letters were kept from me; for I have had to deal with sad folks.'

"'Ay, sir,' said I, speaking with great effort; 'I have no doubt your daughter wrote often, very often.'

"'Why how should you know any thing on that subject? You did not see the letters come, did you?'

"'No, sir; but then Miss Falkland has too good a character for me to believe she could neglect you.'

"'True, Martha, true; you are a sensible, good girl, and I dare say Adele did write, and often too. O fool! credulous fool, that I have been!'

"Here I insisted on giving him some cordial medicines, and on his not talking so much. The medicine he thankfully took; but he persisted in talking, because he said he wanted to relieve his mind, and give me a commission. However, as he found I would not answer, he desisted at last, and gradually fell asleep; and thus another night passed. The next morning he reminded me that he had a commission to give me.

"'Martha,' said he, 'when I am dead, take under your care, and never lose sight of it, a casket in that closet. My attorney knows there is such a thing, for I told him of it as soon as I had reason to be wary; and I was going to put it under his care when I was taken ill. It contains my family jewels, and some left by a relation to Adelaide at my death; these are her property — therefore, the only property her rash father can leave her. Let them be given to the care of my attorneys, Williams & Co. No. 29, Throckmorton street, and do see her yourself, and tell her how bitterly I repented my unkindness to her, and that I blessed her with my last breath.'

"Here I could not contain myself; but wept aloud.

"'Tender-hearted girl!' said he kindly; 'well, I will talk no more in this manner. There, Martha, in that closet is the casket, and on it a brace of loaded pistols that go off with a touch; so take care how you handle them.'

"I now recollected that it was chiefly 'fear of handling these pistols' which had prevented Angelique from carrying off the casket. But at the same time I recollected, with no small alarm, that Merinville had called her fool, and declared he would not sail without the jewels.

"There is no knowledge or power, however insignificant, that may not be turned to account some time or other. I, at this moment, was comforted by knowing that I possessed a power not usually possessed by a woman. To ex-

plain: — When I was about fourteen, I was weakly afraid of the report and even of the sight of fire-arms; and one day when my father shot at a hawk in the garden, I fell down and nearly fainted. He therefore, who, though he admired feminine delicacy, was no patron of feminine fears, had insisted on teaching me to load and fire both a gun and a pistol, as the means of curing this irritability of nerves; and as his word was law, I obeyed, though I began my new course of instruction with a trembling hand and a beating heart. The plan succeeded so completely, that my father then saw danger of my becoming too fond of my new acquirement; he therefore told me, as shooting at a mark was too masculine an amusement for a woman, he advised me to keep my proficiency in it a secret; and I had even forgotten it myself, till these words of my father's recalled it to my mind with a feeling of thankfulness.

"I now began to perceive that my father's sight was rapidly returning—a proof of returning strength, and therefore welcome to me. But it convinced me that I could not long remain concealed from him; and if he was no longer so very weak, there was no longer any danger to him in the disclosure. Yes, there was one obstacle to it — the fear for me which he would immediately feel; I therefore resolved to remain unknown by him as long as I could.

"The clock had now struck twelve, and I believed my father was certainly dozing, if not asleep, when I heard a noise in the back of the house; and as I listened in fearful expectation on the landing-place, I was convinced some persons had broken into the house from the garden, and were then entering the hall; — therefore I could not summon my defender. Nor, as the windows of the chamber did not look into the street, but were at some distance from it, could I call him that way. And I stood almost stupid with fear upon the stairs-head, when I heard a voice, that I knew to be Merinville's, say, in broken English, 'Go up, you dogs! What are you afraid of? If he is dead, I suppose you have seen a dead man before; and if he is alive, it will be easy to despatch him.'

"'Tis as I feared,' thought I, retreating into the room; and thinking that the jewels would be well bestowed to purchase my father's life, I opened the closet door, and having carefully taken the pistols off, and laid them down on the floor, I was ready to come forward and proffer the casket.

"I found that Merinville, afraid of infection, and wishing to unite safety and gain, did not enter the room; but, at the door, directed them to the closet, telling them to take care of the pistols lying on the casket. And while the men, averse evidently to the task, stopped to wonder whether the old gentleman was alive or dead — as, though there were lights, there was no one in the room — Merinville cursed them for cowards; and my father awoke at the noise.

"The men were now in the room; and Merinville, hearing him say, 'who is there?' said, on the outside of the door, 'Go, kill him—go!' But just as they approached the bed, I threw open the closet door; and the sight of my phantom-like dress and figure, and pale cheek, so terrified them, that they flew precipitately, nearly overturning Merinville in their flight, who, thinking my father, armed with pistols, was at their heels, followed them himself with the utmost haste; and for the present I felt that all danger was over. But before I could hasten to summon the watchman, (having first assured myself that the ruffians had left the house,) my attention was called to my nearly fainting father; who, fixing his eyes on me, faltered out, 'It must be so! It is she!—it is my child.'

"Having said this, he stretched out his arms to me, but instantly fell back insensible on his pillow, and it was several minutes before I could restore him to life. But when I succeeded, never shall I forget his eloquent look as he saw me bending over him, nor the affectionate embrace which followed, in which all the past was forgotten, and the present alone remembered.

"My father now suddenly released me from his arms, and, with a look of agony and terror, conjured me never to come near him again, exclaiming, 'Wretch that I am! I have killed, I have destroyed my pious and precious child!'

"At this moment, and before I could say any thing to pacify him, I heard a heavy foot on the stairs, without having heard the hall-door open; therefore I knew it could not be the watchman; and my father heard it too.

"'They are coming again,' cried he; 'and I fear I can't protect you! O, merciful Father! save her, and let me perish!'

"'Hush!' whispered I; 'remember here are pistols, and you know that I can use them.'

"I then took the pistols from the closet, and laying one on the chair near me, I cocked the other, and stood behind the curtain, prepared for defence.

"The door now opened, and, as I expected, Merinville entered.

"'I am not fool enough to be scared by phantoms and ghosts,' said he in French with great volubility; 'therefore I am come back for my prize.'

"'Wretch!' cried my father, 'what crime are you coming to perpetrate?'

"'Merinville,' cried I, drawing aside the curtain a little way, 'I conjure you to depart, and leave these crimes unperpetrated.'

"'Adelaide! Yes, it is Adelaide herself,' cried he; 'Who should have thought it? But you shall not deprive me of the jewels.'

"'You shall have my life first,' cried my father, vociferating for help in a voice whose strength surprised and appalled the ruffian, and convinced him that he had no time to lose; hastening, therefore, to the bed, he was about to silence my father probably for ever, when I, starting forward, levelled my pistol at him, and drew the trigger; but in vain! it flashed in the pan: and Merinville darted round the bed, to vent his rage on me; but being ready armed with the other weapon of death, I aimed, I fired, and he fell on the floor.

"In another instant the watchman, summoned by the sound, rushed into the room, and found me standing motionless, by the bleeding Merinville; shocked, terrified, and stunned, at what my weak hand had achieved.

"'Thou blessed young creature! did you do this?' said my kind friend.

"'He is not dead,' said I, wildly; 'do not tell me he is dead! let me not think I have committed murder!'

"The watchman now raised the body up, and declared he believed he was not even mortally wounded; and soon after, Merinville, recovering his senses entirely, raised himself on his knees.

"'Thank Heaven!' I exclaimed most fervently.

"'Amen!' cried my father, 'for I should have been sorry to see thee, unhappy man, go to thy dread account so unprepared to meet it, and sent thither by my child.'

"'Come, sir, you must go with me,' said the watchman; 'such folks as you must not be suffered to go at large; and after your wound is dressed, I must carry you to the first watch-house.'

"But Merinville pleaded so hard to be allowed to escape, that, as I too favoured the side of mercy, my father commissioned the watchman to do nothing but support him to the house of a surgeon, and leave him then to go withersoever he pleased.

"Accordingly he supported him down stairs, for he could not stand alone; and with a thankful heart I prepared to administer more medicines and wine to my father when I recollected that Merinville's accomplices might return; and having communicated my fears to him, he advised me to reload the pistols; and till the return of the watchman, we remained in a state of the most fearful and agonizing suspense.

"The watchman (whose name was Brent) now came up-stairs, and was a little startled to see me still armed, as if expecting more violence. But when I told him the back of the house was still open, and that Merinville's accomplices might yet be on the premises, he declared that my precaution was quite right; and come what come might, he would watch inside the hall till day-light came, and that the next day he would send proper persons to repair the breaches.

"But we had no more cause for fear that night; and before six o'clock arrived, my father declared that he could bear to be moved into the other room, where there were locks and double bolts. This was indeed a relief to my mind; as was also the intelligence that Merinville was not mortally wounded, but that his wound and weakness were such that he was not likely to stir for weeks; and finding him to be a gentleman who (as Merinville said) had been shot in a love-frolic, the surgeon allowed him to lodge in his house.

"I was now really oppressed, as it were, with the sense of the mercies which I had received; and when by the aid of the good Brent I saw my rapidly recovering parent lying in a clean and healthy bed, and breathing a pure and salubrious air, I found it impossible to clothe my feelings in words, and I could only weep, and lift up my heart in silent thankfulness to my Creator.

"Time now flew on rapid wings; and the day was too short for what my father had to tell and to ask, and I to ask and to tell in return. And O, how sweet it was now to talk of Delaval with my father! But I was really forced to break from him sometimes, to escape from the painful expressions of his gratitude—a word which ought never to be used from a parent to a child; and also in order to prevent him from talking himself ill again. Those who have watched over convalescence like this, know that such convalescents are always inclined to talk unceasingly.

"Night, the fourth night since my arrival, was now come. My father was trying to sleep, and I had thrown myself on a mattress on the floor beside him, when a gentle tap was heard at the bolted door, and I heard the voice of Brent begging to speak to me. But I made him speak again, and convince me also by what he said that he was indeed Brent, before I would open the door. At length I did so; and in one moment I found myself clasped to the bosom of Delaval.

"All recollections, all consciousness, but that he was there—that I held his hand—that I gazed on his face—were at that moment utterly annihilated. And when I heard my father forbid him to come near him, but add to the prohibition the warmest blessing and the kindest words of welcome, overcome with joy I fainted, from the variety of overwhelming emotions.

"The moment of recovered sense was, alas! painful as well as sweet; for though Delaval's countenance expressed nothing but gladness, I saw that my swoon had alarmed my father, and that he feared I had taken the infection.

"'I have taken no infection but that of happiness,' said I; 'and if you would be quiet, and go to sleep, I should be quite well; and Delaval will come again to-morrow morning.'

"'No,' cried Brent, 'that is impossible; and you seem so sorry to see the young gentleman,

that I am unwilling to tell you I let him come only on condition that he was not to go away again.'

"'Oh! but he may catch the fever, and die!' I exclaimed.

"'Why so, Miss? You have not caught it; and now you have purified and fumigated the house, and it is quite another thing.'

"Still I was alarmed; but I could do nothing but submit; and remembering there was a room with a feather-bed in it on the very top of the house, I prevailed on Delaval to try to sleep there, as he had travelled night and day since my express overtook him on the road, and showed him my unsealed letter to the governess, which he ventured to read; instantly turning his horses' heads to London, he came, resolved to share my perils, and to live or die with me.

"Alas! it was difficult for us to defer till morning the numerous inquiries and all the various interesting communications which we had to give and receive; but consideration for my father enjoined the separation; and I believe previous fatigue, and the exhaustion of strong emotion, were able to counteract even the wakefulness and restlessness of joy.

"I, however, kept myself awake till I had given my father his second medicine, and day began to dawn; then to oblige him, and remove his anxious fears, I threw myself on my mattress, and slept soundly for an hour or two. When I awoke, it was now for the first time, I may say for years, that I awoke to joyful anticipation, and to the certain expectation of gazing on the two beings whom I loved best in the world, and at the same time too.

"But this enjoyment was counteracted in a most painful, but perhaps most salutary manner, and my feelings subdued again into a more wholesome and quiet tone, by the severe return of illness to my poor father. He had been too much weakened to bear unhurt the succession of all the most powerful passions in turn operating on his debilitated frame; and for some days fever of the low kind, as fatal often as the plague itself, wore him down to the very verge of the grave; and I might myself have sunk under the fatigue and anxiety of nursing, had not my task been shared by Delaval, and my anxiety soothed by his presence and his care.

"Delaval's history of himself was this. His fellow-prisoner, an Englishman, had died in prison; and he had bribed his jailor to say he himself had died, and then in time he bribed him to let him escape.

"We now seriously began to think of removing, and removing, by Delaval's advice, to another country; as those wicked people had certainly made my father a suspected character, and it was therefore better that we should return to France, and to Provence, where Delaval still possessed a very delightful abode.

"My father approved of the plan; and the more so, as he said, 'because his estate, his paternal estate, had now passed into other hands, and he should hate to remain in England to see it enjoyed by another.'

"'My dear sir,' said Delaval, on hearing this, 'if that be your only objection to remain here, remain by all means; for your estate is not, I hope I may say, gone out of the family, as I am the fortunate purchaser of it. I deposited the money for it, in case it was sold, before I went abroad, and I hold it now only as steward for you, or for your daughter.'

"I never yet saw my father so affected; but he could only press Delaval's hand in his—speak he could not, nor was it at all necessary—for, joining my hand to Delaval's, he pressed them both together in his, and we required nothing more.

"To be brief. It was resolved that we should remove from London, and get to the coast as soon as we could. But the watchman advised that we should go in disguise, to escape troublesome examinations and interruptions; and he agreed to procure disguises for Delaval and me. For my father I had the coat and other things of poor old Mansel, which were, for a gentleman, disguise sufficient.

"At ten that night our faithful and assiduous friend furnished us not only with the disguises necessary, but also with the means of removal; and having procured a sort of farmer's covered cart and a stout horse, he stationed them in a little lane at the end of our garden; and at midnight we prepared to leave the scene of danger and of death. I must say that we parted from our humble friend with an earnest wish to meet again; and as Delaval had the power to show our gratitude more strongly than by words, he settled on him such an annuity as would secure to him and his aged parent, to whom he was tenderly attached, every comfort that they required. 'And if,' we added, 'on her death, you wish to see us again, and will come and live with us abroad, we will find employment for you, and give you a home; and through the person who pays you your annuity, you can always hear of us, and send to us.'

"The good Brent was all thankfulness, and we departed.

"Behold us now, at midnight, in the disguise of peasants, and in a farmer's cart, turning our backs on London and its noxious vapours. But whatever was our anxiety to get away from it and from England, we could not think of going to the coast without visiting the poor old butler; and we directed our horses' heads to the insulated inn, not being quite sure whether we should gain admittance. But as the landlord was a rational man, and we assured him our house had been washed and fumigated, and our linen changed again and again, since the plague attacked the house and my father, he admitted us to what was, we found, the death-bed of poor Mansel. But never can I forget the

life and joy which beamed in his fast-closing eyes, when he beheld my father, followed by Delaval and myself, approach his bed-side, and heard my father exclaim, pressing me fondly to him as he spoke, — 'Mansel, this creature came just in time, and she saved my life!'

"'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace!' cried the old man, gazing with an expression of calm thankfulness on my father.

"'See, Mansel,' said I, 'see! my father has your coat and linen on; and it has been so useful to us!'

"A flush of pride, mixed probably with a less pleasant emotion—the consciousness of my father's past and present peril, and a feeling of almost feudal reverence, which made him deem it a sort of degradation to his master to wear his coat — now crimsoned over his wan countenance. But an expression of thankfulness was still the predominant one; and again he thanked God, audibly. That was the last effort of expiring nature; he now tried to grasp my father's hand and mine to his fast-heaving bosom, and for a minute or two we felt his heart beat against our united fingers; but in another instant it ceased to beat—and a glance at his changed features showed us that all was over.

"It was with difficulty we got my father away from the body; nor would he stir till he had closed the old man's eyes.

"My father had suffered so much from the treachery of those whom he loved and trusted, that he clung, fondly clung, to the faithful amongst the faithless — and such had Mansel been to him. And when, on opening the old man's will, which he had entrusted to the landlord, it was found that he had left (as he had no near relations,) all his little earnings to my father, it was with the greatest difficulty that we could prevail on him not to stay and attend the funeral himself. But, after the strictest charge to have it conducted in the most respectable manner possible, we induced him to set off. Indeed, delay was dangerous; for a person, sent by our friend Brent, came to us to say, that one of the agents of the government had come to inquire if Mr. Falkland was alive or dead; and finding, on examining the neighbours, that there was reason to think he was alive and well, and had got away in the night, he had declared a search-warrant would soon be sent after him.

"Accordingly, we travelled all the next night, still retaining our cart and our disguises. To be brief. We at length reached the coast of Yarmouth in safety; and after a prosperous voyage we landed at Rotterdam, whence we proceeded to Paris; and having seen every thing worth seeing there and on the road, travelling or resting as best suited my father's varying strength, we at length found ourselves again in Provence.

"Gladly, indeed, did Delaval and I hail once more the beloved banks of the Durance; and that cradle of our first loves became the scene of our wedded happiness. With what heartfelt delight did Delaval and I renew, at the tomb of my mother, those vows of eternal love which we exchanged there so many years ago, and which so many disasters since had threatened to render vain! But we met there once more, with our affections cemented still stronger by time and trials; — and now we met to part no more.

"But the scenes which recollection so much endeared to us, it rendered nearly intolerable to my father; and the house and the garden adjoining Delaval's, which he quitted in 1660 with such regret, because he had inhabited them with my mother, and that they breathed of her, were now become odious in his sight; since he considered himself as having insulted her revered memory by giving her so unworthy a successor; nor could he ever prevail on himself to visit her tomb, once the object of his daily tribute of flowers.

"In short, it was so evident to us that our present abode had a pernicious effect on my father's health and spirits, that we resolved to abandon it; and not many months after our marriage we hired a very fine house near Marseilles, which commanded a view of the bay and the port; — a view which in beauty perhaps the world cannot parallel; and thither we removed.

"My father consented to continue with us as *our boarder*—but on no other terms. And the legacy of Mansel, the sale of his town-house (when the plague ceased,) and the wreck of his property after his debts were paid, gave him at last a comfortable income again.

"Let us now look back to the foreigners.

"Madame du Vernis reached Paris in safety, and joined her husband there. He received her kindly, because she brought money and goods with her; and he therefore forgave her the way in which she had acquired them, but he did not forget it — and her life was more wretched with him than ever. At length misery brought on disease; and fearing it was an infectious one, her husband left her as she had left my father; and she died, poor unhappy woman! without a friend to smooth her dying pillow, or a relative to close her eyes.

"Adrienne's fate was a much happier one; she had married into a respectable and domestic family, and had a kind husband; and the maternal tie excited in her young heart a sense of duty and of happiness which her pernicious education had hitherto counteracted; and I have always heard good accounts of her, both as a mother and a wife.

"Merinville—the ruffian, profligate, and disgraced Merinville—after struggling for months between life and death in disease, the consequence of his wound, was so deeply awakened to a sense of his past wickedness, especially of that which had plunged him in his state of

suffering, that he made a full confession of all his guilt to his compassionate host; and owned to him, that, seeing his accomplices take flight in alarm, he concluded that my father, armed with the pistols, was behind them, and not that they ran away because they fancied they had seen a spectre; but that as soon as he had found his error, he returned, resolved to murder whosoever opposed his designs.

"Whether it was that his body was healed by the relief afforded to his mind by confession, I know not; but he certainly, as I have heard, recovered from that time; and when able to be removed, he rewarded the surgeon handsomely by some remittances which his sister had the justice to send him out of her evil gains; and then he returned to France; where, going from utter scepticism to the extreme of fanaticism, (a very common case,) he took the vows in the order of La Trappe; and his health, never firmly re-established, soon sunk under the rigid discipline of the order; and his death—as she really was tenderly attached to him—put a finishing stroke to the earthly hopes of the wretched Angelique, who did not long survive him; and whose end, I fear, had not the consolations of his.

"But to return to happier scenes and happier persons—ourselves and my father.

"Our residence at Marseilles was a succession of happy years. Delaval and I saw our youth renewed in three lovely children;—but I forgot,—I am writing to them. Yet why should I hesitate to give them the meed that they so well deserve? why hesitate to say, that from infancy to childhood, from childhood up to youth, and now as virtuous wives and tender mothers, my daughters have ever been sources of pride and pleasure to me? and that my son treads in the footsteps of his ever-admirable father? Yes, twenty years of our residence at Marseilles was uninterrupted enjoyment; and therefore to describe it would be impossible. The gilded vessel, with every sail unfurled, that, catching the sunbeams and the western breeze, glides down the smooth surface of the summer sea, charms the sight as it passes, and still shines brightly to the memory when it has vanished; but still it leaves no trace behind to mark that it has been.

"And thus it is with days passed in uniform contentment—one day resembled another in its flight, as each undulating motion of the white-sailed vessel resembled the other on the bright and buoyant wave. But to describe them were as impossible as tedious.

"However, as soon as the edict of Nantz was revoked, my father, who had with difficulty tolerated living under a complete despotism, became outrageous in his expressions of discontent; and was, I own, justly loud in his censures of that weak monarch, most falsely called the *Great;* who, when no longer able to lead a life of notorious profligacy, *reformed,* (as he called it,) married a subject, and became a narrow-minded, cruel, and persecuting bigot.

"But it was a comfort for me to know that my father, when angry, always spoke his own native language, which, luckily, no one around us understood.

"It was now that what has been happily called *la mission bottée*, or the booted mission, took place; and that dragoons were sent as missionaries to convert the poor Huguenots, and frighten people into conversion, they knew not why. You may suppose my father was tolerably eloquent on this subject; and had there not been at this time a prospect for him of returning to England not only in safety but with triumph—of returning to what my father called *regenerated* England—his restlessness and dissatisfaction would have clouded over the sunshine of our days. But in 1688 the Prince of Orange landed at Torbay; and in 1689, he and the princess his wife were declared king and queen of England, by the name of 'William and Mary.'

"Never shall I lose sight of the image of my father when he first heard of the abdication of James Stuart, (as he called him,) and of this glorious event. He had a silk night-cap on—his usual morning costume; and he threw his cap up in the air, and shouted with a shout of ecstasy.

"Delaval, and a loyal Provençale marquis, were walking in our garden at this moment; and seeing the action from the window, they both thought my father was seized with a sudden fit of frenzy; and the former, hastening full-speed to the house, did not feel his fears diminished when my bald-headed father clasped him to his bosom in a rapturous embrace. Luckily, however, my father explained the cause of his delight before the old marquis could arrive; and Delaval begged of my father to let him explain an appearance so singular. He did so, by telling the marquis it was the astonishing news from England that had so agitated my father; and when he heard what it was, the loyal old man concluded that indignant grief, and not joy, had thrown *le pauvre* Monsieur Falkland into a frenzy; and he had the most entire pity and sympathy for his feelings; while I, seeing that, if my father stayed a moment longer, he would burst into some violent expressions which would make him an object of aversion and suspicion while we stayed, hurried him, on pretence of his requiring quiet and silence, into the next room.

"That evening, and the next day, innumerable were the inquiries made after us and our father—that loyal and respectable subject of *le bon roi, Jaques;* and it was with great satisfaction that I saw the carriages drive round, which were to convey us from the land of bigotry and despotism to the land of my birth, and now the land of freedom, safety, and toleration. For, during our twenty-four years' re-

sidence abroad, Delaval and I had resumed our polemical studies; and, from mature conviction, had resolved to abjure the errors of the church of Rome, as soon as we reached London; nor could we help rejoicing still more at this decision of our consciences, when we received the intelligence, just before we set off, that the last relation who stood between Delaval and an earldom in his family, was now dead, and that he would return to England, Earl of Seaton and Baron Delaval.

"At length the morning of our departure arrived; and though overjoyed at the idea of returning to England, (especially as the thought seemed to restore my beloved father to all the vigour of youth,) I felt considerable pain at leaving the scene of so many years of perfect happiness.

"It would be impossible for me to describe my own or Delaval's feelings, when we again saw the white cliffs of Albion! To describe my father's, therefore, may well be an impossible task. He who had left his country, impoverished and ill, a proscribed man, and in danger of losing his liberty, was now returning healthy, rich, and happy—and came to abide in a land of freedom and of safety! His daughter too—his only child—coming with her husband to present herself and children at the court of her sovereigns, foremost amongst the nobles of the land!

"I am sure, as the carriages whirled us along the road to London, my father forgot he was on the verge of eighty; and felt as young and vigorous as when (but for the earnest and agonized entreaties of my mother, then on the point of being confined) he wanted to follow Colonel Hampden to the field.

"He was never tired of looking out of the window, and he fancied that already the people looked happier; and scarcely could he help nodding to them as he passed, and audibly wishing them joy. Once or twice we heard shouting in the street; and it was well it was dark, for my father would shout too, with his head out of the window, though he could not know why.

"Oh! sweet is the intoxication, sweet the folly of happiness! and we had all of us purchased such joy as this in England, by many a bitter pang.

"The good old Brent too, who, I forgot to say, joined us in Provence on the death of his mother, and became our house-steward, was now in our train, and enjoyed the idea of breathing his last in his own country.

"You know already that the picture of me, with a red cross on my neck, which was inserted by my father's express command, in memorial of the scenes of the plague, was painted at Marseilles, by a celebrated French artist, at my father's express desire; and that the small whole-length of me, with my lantern, first accosting Brent, with a street and dead bodies in the background, was also executed by him, for my too grateful parent, who loved to recall and perpetuate what he termed the triumph of filial love. Brent, as well as himself and Delaval, were painted at the same time; and this narrative will, I trust, be no uninteresting *explanation of these pictures.*

"You will readily remember that we were not slow in presenting ourselves in the royal circle at Whitehall; nor can you have forgotten how graciously we were received. Nor can I forget, and you, my children, as you are now mothers yourselves, will readily enter into the joy I felt at hearing not only that the Lady Adelaide and the Lady Delaval were amongst the most beautiful of the young ladies at court—for that was no merit of their own; but that the queen as well as others remarked that their manners and their dress, both for elegance and modesty, were a pattern to other young ladies; and proved not only their taste and understanding, but their nice sense of propriety.

"You may remember also, that on the second day of my appearance at court, the queen, who had heard my story from a partial friend of ours, complimented me on my *filial piety*—a compliment which, from *her* lips, surprised me; as I thought *that* a virtue which the daughter of the dethroned king, and the wife of the reigning one, was not supposed to hold in high estimation.

"It was, however, a great joy to me that my father did at last recollect he was no longer young, and wished to leave London; for I sighed for the quiet of the country; therefore, when Delaval (after we had both abjured the catholic religion) had taken the oaths and his seat, and could be spared from his duties in parliament, we retired to his noble mansion in the north, meaning to reside chiefly there during the remainder of our lives; but not before (by my beloved lord's desire) Kneller had painted that whole-length of me, which shows me, O how unlike the former pictures! fat and blooming with health and happiness.

"And I was indeed happy then;—nay, I am happy still. Heaven still spares to me my father in green old age; and his great-grandchildren are ever welcome playmates round his knee.

"It is, you know, at his desire that I have written this narrative, without leaving out any relation or any remark that bears hard in any way on him. 'I know, Adele,' said he, 'you will set down nought in malice; but I insist on it that you shall nothing extenuate;' and I have scrupulously obeyed him.

"I must notice *one* instance of consistency of feeling and principle in my father;—whatever were his political prejudices and his party spirit, he never let either conquer his sense of justice and his abhorrence of injustice. When he heard of the massacre at Glenco—and found that if the king knew nothing of it, he had certainly omitted to take the proper steps to prevent the possibility of its taking place—he

declared he never would go to court again. For though he admired the principle on which William had been elected, and believed the *monarch* a constitutional one, he never could like the *man* after that bloody business, and therefore, would not pay him any mark of private respect.

"My beloved lord tried to reason with him on this subject, and to convince him that the whole fault rested with Lord Stair and Lord Bredalbane; but he would not listen to him. He said that a king who did his duty should see narrowly into the details of every transaction likely to involve the shedding of human blood, and the *fellow* ought to have taken care to employ conscientious and humane men.

"When I heard my father again speaking of kings without their titles, and by irreverend designations, I knew all arguing was in vain; and that king William was irrevocably deposed from his good opinion.

"I have nothing more to add, except an assurance that every breath I breathe is one of thankfulness for blessings so vast, and, I may add, so undeserved. Yet let me draw one moral from my tale myself, as a warning, an example, and an encouragement to others. That to perform one's duty, at whatever risk and sacrifice to one's self, is always the safest, and even in this world is usually the happiest path; and that powerless to destroy—however they may threaten—beat the waves of woe against the endangered feet of those who firmly and closely cling unto the Rock of Ages."

When I had finished the manuscript, my host, looking in, asked me if I should not now like to see the picture which he promised to show me; and throwing open the doors of what he called his best drawing-room, I beheld the picture by Kneller, mentioned above; and saw this interesting woman at full-length, in the ermined robes of a countess, which gracefully hung over a rich white satin gown; and on the table by her side was her coronet.

This picture, Kneller's master-piece, I think, did indeed exhibit her sweet countenance in the perfection of happiness; with every finger dimpled, and her fine-formed throat and shoulders, round and indicative of health, as well as beauty. While I gazed on her, I could not believe that she was then at the advanced age of seven and forty. But so it was; and I could not but exclaim, "What a preservative is happiness! There is no cosmetic like it." And I must own that when I looked at this lady and saw from her speaking face such a thorough conviction that she felt as happy as she professed to be—the pleasing consciousness that she had at length met with her deserts, forced into my eyes, as I gazed on her, no unpleasing tears.

My host now claimed my promise, and altering all the names of the parties, I have given the manuscript to the world; sure that it will excite friendly sympathy in some, and be received, I trust, with indulgence, at least, from all.

I have said as little as I well could do on politics, in a narrative of times so full of political tumults and interests; but not to allude to them at all, would have indicated as little observation, and as much callousness of feeling, in the writer, as that voyager would exhibit, who, while sailing down a wide and rapid river, should take no notice, and make no mention in his journal, of the rocks and mountains by which the river was bounded, the shallows or the rapids which occasionally obstructed his passage, and the trees and flowers that shaded and ornamented its banks.

THE RUFFIAN BOY.

A TALE FOUNDED ON FACT.

"Who is that lovely girl coming along the street?" said Adolphus Waldemar, the younger son of a German baron, to two other young men, as they were lounging at the door of a bookseller's shop, in the city of Ratisbon.

"It is Ethelind Manstein—one of our beauties," replied the young Baron Sigvert.

"And not improperly so called," replied Waldemar, "if distance does not magnify her charms."

Ethelind, who usually walked fast, and who at this moment increased her pace, in order to escape as soon as possible from the observation she was conscious of exciting, now came near enough to convince Waldemar that the nearer she was beheld the more beautiful she was; and while the blush on her cheek grew still deeper, as she passed the group of gentlemen, and curtsied gracefully to those whom she knew, Waldemar thought he had never seen so charming a woman.

"It is strange," said he, "that she is yet unmarried."

"It is her own fault," replied Sigvert, in a tone of pique.

"No doubt; for though I am only a stranger amongst you at present, I believe that you men of Ratisbon have taste and feelings like other men, and must, therefore, have admired Ethelind Manstein."

"Yes; but though willing to marry her, we have none of us been willing to marry her appurtenances."

"What are they? Is that fine Newfoundland dog one, that gambols beside her?"

"Yes, that he is; and an elderly man nearly past work, a sort of major-domo to her father, who bequeathed both these choice articles to

her, and I fancy, on condition that she never parted with them."

"Is she an orphan, then?"

"She is, and left in very good circumstances."

"Is she well born?"

"Certainly."

"And she is beautiful, rich, and young! possessed of that treasure, a faithful old servant, and that trusty guardian, a Newfoundland dog, both of which she considers as sacred deposits, because they were willed to her by her father; and are, therefore, proofs of her possessing those strong recommendations—filial piety and strict principle! So far, all I have heard of her increases her value as a wife."

"But you have not heard all. She has also an insane, or rather a fatuous person residing with her — a middle-aged woman, and therefore not likely to die, whom she has vowed never to part with, but to watch over her till death."

"Indeed! A relation, perhaps?"

"None, whatever; — but her parents took care of her till they died, for some reason which they never disclosed; and Ethelind, from some romantic feeling of generosity, persists in declaring that she will never marry, unless her lovêr promises solemnly to allow her to retain this miserable object under her own roof; — and I know that on one occasion, when the lover proposed to her was a very desirable match, and she was inclined to like him," (here Sigvert blushed, and drew up his neckcloth with an air of self-sufficiency, which convinced Waldemar that he spoke of himself) "she coolly said, — 'Before you continue this subject, you must understand that I would not marry even a man that I loved most tenderly, unless he allowed my *pauvre maman*, as I call her, to reside under my roof, and my old man to form a part of my establishment.' 'The man may be an acquisition,' replied my friend; 'but the *pauvre maman* is such a memento of human misery, that really I — I cannot—' 'You hesitate,' she replied, 'but you will find me determined.' In short, seeing that he could not overcome her resolution, my friend retired from the contest; nor is he the only one who has been so foiled, and has, therefore, so retired."

"Then these gentlemen were none of them deeply in love," said Waldemar; "that is very evident." And wishing his companions good morning, he fell insensibly into a reverie; while not so insensibly, perhaps, he walked in the direction which Ethelind Manstein had taken.

Waldemar's observations on human character had convinced him that selfishness was the most prevailing vice in society, and a preference of one's own accommodation to that of others; and knowing how necessary it is to happiness in the married state, that those who enter on it should be capable of giving up their own wishes, even in trifles, whenever the beloved object required such a sacrifice, he could not but consider what he had just heard of Ethelind as a very sufficient proof that the woman, who either from duty or romance was capable of sacrificing her chance of marrying for the sake of an infirm and even unconscious being, must possess that superiority to selfish indulgence and consideration for self, which was the best foundation for excellence in every situation of life; and he resolved to obtain an introduction to her as fast as possible. In the meanwhile, he continued to walk on, in hopes of seeing her again.

Nor was it long before he beheld her returning; and just as they were near each other he was so fortunate as to be able to render her a service. The Newfoundland dog, while jumping and pawing in the exuberance of his animal spirits, jumped up so immediately in front of his mistress, as to entangle his paws in her feet, and to throw her forward towards the ground, which she would certainly have reached, to the injury probably of some part of her frame, had not Waldemar caught her in his arms.

"You are not hurt, I hope?" said he, though he saw with some alarm that the cheek so lately blooming was now pale as with the hue of death.

"Not hurt, thanks to your kindness, sir; but much frightened." And having with great difficulty articulated these words, she was obliged to lean on the arm of Waldemar for support.

Perhaps a man's heart is never so much in danger as when an interesting woman has received a service from him, and also leans for support in timid helplessness on his superior power. The self-love of the sex is gratified—they are fond of protecting; and are never, perhaps, more likely to show their weakness, than at the moment when their superior strength is acknowledged.

Ethelind soon recovered herself; yet not so soon as might have been expected from the slightness of the accident.

"You will think me, sir, a very weak foolish creature," said Ethelind, blushing, "to be so soon overpowered; but painful circumstances early in life so completely shattered my nervous system, that the least surprise or alarm agitates me as you see."

She then curtsied; and, chiding her dog into quietness, would have proceeded alone; but Waldemar insisted on accompanying her a little way, lest her faintness should return; and telling her that though a stranger, he was well known to her acquaintance, Baron Sigvert, he said he should presume to offer her himself that attendance which Sigvert would have given, had he been present.

"I think I saw you talking with the baron as I passed Muller's shop just now?" replied Ethelind, blushing.

"I could not suppose you did me the honour of remarking me; but as you saw me in good company, and must therefore suppose I am *un homme comme il faut*, perhaps you will allow me to support those still tottering steps with my arm?"

Ethelind knew more of Waldemar than he did of her. The arrival of a young, well-born, and handsome stranger—and rich too, from having just inherited the fortune of a female relation—with the intention of taking up his future abode at Ratisbon, was a circumstance too important in any city not to be talked of universally; and little as Ethelind mixed in the general society of the place, she had heard so much in favour of Waldemar, as to wish to see him; she was, therefore, not sorry to be so soon introduced to him, even though it was by a disagreeable circumstance.

Nor did she hesitate to take his offered arm, as she still trembled, and the dog was still disposed to renew his dangerous gambols.

On their way back, they met the Baron Sigvert to whom Waldemar, unasked, related the cause of the happiness which he was enjoying, and immediately requested to be presented by name to his fair charge.

"Now, then," said Waldemar gayly, "I claim the privilege of acquaintance, and will not allow Sigvert to do what I see he meditates—that is, deprive me of my companion, and constitute himself your supporter; therefore I must be allowed to see you safe to your own door."

Ethelind was above affectation; and knowing the respectability of her supporter, she granted him the permission which he asked; and he did not leave her till he had conducted her home.

The next day he called to inquire concerning her health, and left his card; and meeting Ethelind soon after on the public walk, whither he found out she usually walked every day, she could not help saying, that the next time he called she hoped he would come in. In short, it was not very long before Waldemar found himself as much in love as a man could be, and had reason to believe that Ethelind's heart sympathized with his.

Still, he was at a loss how to proceed. Others, he was told, though approved of, had been refused, because they were unwilling to accede to the terms of acceptance; but, then, thought he, if Ethelind should only give me the preference because I am willing to accede to them! The thought was too painful to be dwelt upon; but before he could make up his mind how to act, an opportune moment to disclose his passion threw him off his guard, as he was sitting alone with Ethelind at her own house—and his love was declared.

Ethelind heard the declaration with evident pleasure, mingled with evident pain; and when she could speak, she assured him, that the manner in which he should receive what she was obliged to tell him, would, she felt, stamp her future fate with happiness or the contrary.

Waldemar's heart beat tumultuously; but, without telling her he knew what she had to say, he requested her to proceed.

She did so, but in great agitation; for now, and only now, had she learned what it was to love. "And now," said she, when she had finished her communications, "I must say, that whatever it may cost me, in this instance, to adhere to my resolution, it is, and must be, for ever inevitable, and I would die rather than break it."

Waldemar's doubts vanished before the perfect conviction of being beloved, which her manner gave him; and he insisted on being immediately made known to the poor *maman*, who was soon, he trusted, and for ever, to be a resident under his roof, and under their joint care.

Ethelind answered him only by her tears, and by giving him her hand. When she could speak, she said, "Alas! how I regret that my *pauvre maman* cannot be made sensible of the happiness that awaits her dear Mina, as she calls me!"

"Mina! but your name is Ethelind?"

"Yes, but she fancies me her daughter whom she lost some years ago; and the only pleasure she is capable of feeling is what my presence evidently gives her;—so you see I cannot possibly part with her."

"No, not with such a heart as yours;—but why is she thus afflicted, and why is she dependent on you?"

"A dreadful circumstance," replied Ethelind, turning very pale, "deprived her in one moment of child and reason too, and the villany of her son has since deprived her of fortune."

"What was the circumstance?"

"Spare me the painful relation to-day," said Ethelind, much agitated; "it is only by a considerable effort that I can ever bring myself to relate it; but it is my duty to have no concealment from you; therefore, if able, I will tell you all to-morrow; in the meanwhile, let me show you my poor *maman*."

Ethelind then led the wondering Waldemar into an inner apartment opening into a spacious garden. And there he beheld a lady, about the age of fifty, whose fine features told a tale of former beauty, and her pale cheek one of sorrow and suffering; while her vacant eye betrayed the utter imbecility of her mind, and her limbs hanging listlessly down declared the absence almost of life itself.

Can any thing, thought Waldemar, animate that statue? as he gazed on her in silent commiseration; but as soon as she saw Ethelind, his unuttered question was answered. Intelligence and affection lighted up her full dark eyes; and springing forward to meet her, she flew to her with extended arms, exclaiming—"*Mina, chère Mina!*"

"*Maman, pauvre maman,*" said Ethelind, returning her embrace; while the interesting object of her tenderness, casting first a fearful glance around, gazed on Ethelind with a look of unutterable fondness, and said, "*Mais oui, je la tiens—assurément c'est elle.*"*

"Is she a Frenchwoman?" demanded Waldemar; "and does she always fancy you the daughter whom she lost?"

"She is a native of France; and since her loss of reason she seems to remember no language but her native one, and always welcomes me as you see, and calls me Mina; her daughter, my particular friend, had she been living, would have been my age, and was reckoned very like me."

"Happy delusion!" cried Waldemar. "No wonder that your benevolent heart takes pleasure in shedding a few beams of comfort thus, on a lot otherwise too gloomy."

"*Je vais chanter, chère maman, assieds-toi,*"† said Ethelind; and she seated herself opposite Ethelind, saying,—"*Ah! Mina va chanter! quel bonheur pour moi!*"‡

"Poor thing!" said Waldemar; "she is now a sort of barrel-organ which plays but one tune, nor that till it is wound up."

"But as it then makes sweet music to my heart, can you wonder that to wind it up gives me a sort of sad pleasure?"

"No, quite on the contrary; and I envy you the power."

Ethelind then seated herself at her harp, and sang one of the favourite airs which the lost Mina used to excel in; while the deceived and comforted parent listened in almost breathless delight; and the fine eyes of Waldemar, spite of himself, glistened with a tear, which a variety of new and indescribable emotions had gathered there.

Ethelind, as she looked up, saw, and was overcome by his emotion; and as her spirits had been much agitated before, her head dropped upon her harp, and she burst into tears.

The *pauvre maman* instantly rose, and running to her, placed Ethelind's head on her emaciated bosom; and patting her head affectionately, exclaimed, in great agitation,—"*Ne pleurez pas, ma chère enfant! tes larmes me tuent.*"§

But Ethelind's tears flowed still faster. At length, however, she made an effort to disengage herself from the arms of her agitated companion, and rising, said, "I have been very wrong and very selfish in giving way to such emotion before this afflicted one, and we had better leave her now." Then, kissing her poor charge, who still hung about her, she said,—"*Adieu! pauvre maman, je reviendrai bientôt.*"* While, fearful of being detained, she beckoned Waldemar to follow her, and was out of sight in a moment.

The *pauvre maman* followed her with her eyes till she disappeared, and then returned to her seat—or rather the statue returned to its pedestal; for with Ethelind all her life and consciousness seemed to vanish; and Waldemar on looking back as he closed the door, beheld her looking and sitting as he did before she was conscious of the presence of Ethelind.

"I never had my feelings or my curiosity more strongly excited in my life," said Waldemar, when he saw Ethelind, whose emotion had not yet subsided; "and I shall most anxiously expect your promised narrative. But let me gratify your kind heart, dearest Ethelind, by assuring you that I myself shall derive gratification from knowing that my roof shelters so interesting and helpless a sufferer; and that my wife has power, by her presence and her care, to lessen the horrors of a visitation like this."

"Joy, you know, has its tears as well as sorrow," replied Ethelind; "and your assurances are a cordial to my heart. Leave me now; I owe poor *maman* some amends for the emotion I have caused her, and I will go sing her to sleep."

Waldemar obeyed; more in love with Ethelind since he had witnessed the foregoing scene, and more delighted than ever with his wedded prospects.

The next day he kept his appointment. What passed between them I shall not now relate; suffice that Waldemar went the next day to Brussels, which was her native place, and where her own brother was married and settled; that soon after his return, preparations for their nuptials were begun, and they were solemnized as soon as Ethelind's last mourning for her parents was over; and the *pauvre maman*, the old servant, and Carlo the Newfoundland dog, removed with the bride to the house of Waldemar, which was situated about a mile from Ratisbon.

Never did union begin under apparently brighter auspices than that of the Baron Waldemar and Ethelind Manstein; and every year brought with it an increase of happiness.

Still it was observed that a cloud often passed over the beautiful brow of Ethelind, and that she grew more nervous and more easily alarmed than ever. But, on such occasions, Waldemar's attentions used to be even more tender and more marked than usual; and his expostulations evidently tranquillized her feelings.

Time insensibly wore away, and Ethelind had been a wife and a mother twelve happy years, and beheld, with unimpaired beauty, four lovely children gambolling by her side,

* Yes, I hold her—assuredly it is she.

† I am going to sing, dear mamma, seat thyself.

‡ Ah! Mina is going to sing; what happiness for me!

§ Do not cry, my dear child; thy tears kill me.

* Adieu, poor mamma! I shall come back very soon.

and rivalling her and her husband in personal graces, when Waldemar was summoned to see a dying friend at Saltsburg.

It was their first separation, and it was a great trial to them both; but Waldemar had invited some distant relations of his to bear his wife company in his absence, lest her nervous feelings should return; and he left her, promising to make his visit as short as possible.

One evening, as Ethelind and her guests were taking their fruit and wine in the garden, in a hot evening in June, an English gentleman, who was on his travels, and who had just left Brussels, and had lately been presented to Waldemar and his family, joined the cheerful group, and was cordially welcomed to their repast.

In the course of conversation this gentleman said, "A very singular person was pointed out to me the other day in the streets of Brussels, a man not more than nine-and-twenty now, who has passed fifteen years of his life in prison, for having at the age of only fourteen, stabbed a young lady to the heart, in a fit of jealousy; for which crime he was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment; but five years of his punishment have been remitted, and he was liberated the very day that I saw him."

He had scarcely uttered these last words, when, with a deep groan, Ethelind fell from her seat in a swoon resembling death; and it was long before her consciousness returned; when it did, she uttered nothing but vehement importunities that Waldemar might be sent for, directly.

Her guests and Mr. Meynell (the Englishman) were overwhelmed with consternation, and eagerly demanded an explanation of the cause that produced so singular an effect and so earnest a request.

Ethelind instantly, on recollection, recalled the request; as her well-regulated feelings taught her always to prefer Waldemar's peace to her own gratification; and as soon as she had quite recovered the shock she had sustained, and had sent her children to bed, she prepared to relieve her own mind, and that of her friends, by giving the explanation which they desired; and she did so, in the following narrative.

"You will no longer wonder that the intelligence our friend Meynell brought should have deprived me of sense, when I inform you that the wretched young man, whom he saw after his recent deliverance from prison, aimed that blow at me, which killed another; and deprived at one sad moment my poor friend Mina of existence, and her mother, who was near us, of reason.

"After having undergone and escaped such danger at a moment of unapprehensive security, you will not wonder at the sudden starts and nervousness which you have often observed in me; nor at the silence which I have till now, except to Waldemar, always kept on this most agitating subject. But I will now tell you every thing, that I may ask and profit by your advice."

Here Ethelind paused; and after her auditors had vented their various feelings in exclamations of wonder and of pity, she continued thus:

"Mina and I went to the same dancing-school with Geraldi Duval, the unhappy man in question; who, though he distinguished me by the most marked attention, was always to me an object of dislike not unmixed with alarm. It was perhaps the fierceness of his expression that gave me this feeling, for his face is strikingly handsome; and though only fourteen at the time I now mention, his person was very tall, full, and commanding; he therefore looked quite old enough, certainly, to be my partner; but I, being sixteen myself, thought a boy of fourteen a mere child. Consequently, I never danced with Geraldi when I could help it, and pride, perhaps, had some share in this resolution.

"Geraldi was an orphan, whose father's origin was unknown; but his mother was a Neapolitan, and the widow of one of those itinerant Italians who go about selling casts and painted heads. His father, however, contrived, no one knows how, to scrape a little money together; and when he died he left a decent fortune behind him. His wife did not long survive him; and was spared, poor thing! the wretchedness of seeing her son's crime, the consequence, probably, of her criminal indulgence. This little fortune, whatever it was, enabled Geraldi to have the education of a gentleman; and a sort of nominal guardian sent him to the dancing-school which I mentioned before. But his penetrating eye soon discovered that in the son of Theresa Geraldi and Guillaume Duval, a Frenchman of obscure birth, the youth of both sexes in the school did not acknowledge the son of a gentleman; and but for his persevering temper, and the unfortunate partiality which he imbibed for me, I believe he would have left the school. But for my sake he seemed resolved to bear with the impertinent familiarity of one, and the cold disdain of another. However, my conscience does not reproach me with treating him with *hauteur*, but simply with evident dislike; and that not the result of pride alone, but of the fear his bright and terrible eye occasioned me, and the proud assumption of his manner.

"I am thus diffuse in order to account, as much as possible, by the probable preparatory state of his mind and feelings, for the violence which I have to narrate.

"Our time of leaving dancing-school arrived, and Mina and I were allowed to go to balls and parties. We were then both of us nearly seventeen, and Geraldi nearly fifteen.

"One evening a ball was to be given for the benefit of a public charity, and the young peo-

ple of both sexes were to wear fancy dresses. I, accompanied by my parents, and Mina by her mother, her only surviving parent, went to this ball, which was splendid in every point of view. Mina and I were dressed exactly alike, which made our usual resemblance to each other more striking; and the first person whose earnest gaze attracted our conscious observation, was Geraldi Duval, habited in the most becoming manner, and proudly pre-eminent in stature and beauty.

"I was so surrounded by friends, and so constantly dancing, that Geraldi, who did not dance, had no opportunity of speaking to me, though he was evidently watching to do so; but towards the close of the evening, when I had finished waltzing with a relation of Mina's, and was sitting with her at an open window, Geraldi came up and asked me to dance the next English country-dance with him. I refused, on the ground of being too much tired to dance again — and at that moment I felt so. On hearing this, his countenance expressed mortification, yet not displeasure; but seeing he was disposed to sit by Mina and me, I complained that we were too much exposed to the air at that window, and led the way into another apartment. Geraldi then muttered something between his teeth, and slowly followed, but suddenly turned off again.

"Bear with my weakness, my dear friends; but indeed I never recall Geraldi that evening without painful commiseration. He had taken pains to vie in dress and appearance with the proudest youth in the room; and his glass must have assured him that he shone in the very perfection of youthful beauty. But the girl in whose eyes he chiefly wished to shine, beheld him with ill-concealed dislike, refused him her hand in the dance, coldly, if not contemptuously; and though, for her sake, he declined to dance with any one else, she was neither grateful for his preference, nor attracted by his appearance.

"But I did still worse; after having refused *him*, I danced with *another*. I could not resist my favourite waltz; and not seeing Geraldi, I joined the waltzers with a man of the highest rank present. O that appalling moment, when, while pausing to take breath, I beheld Geraldi gazing on me with the look of a fiend; his eyes fiery with rage, his lips livid, and holding up his hand at me in a menacing attitude! But the impression this formidable apparition made on me was transient; again the gay circle revolved; again my partner bore me round the graceful ring; and when the waltz was over Geraldi had disappeared, and I looked for him again in vain.

"I have since learnt, that when he left the house he went to a tavern and fortified his nerves with copious draughts of wine. He then went home, poor youth! pulled off his useless finery, resumed his ordinary apparel, armed himself with a sort of dagger, and returned to the porch of the house where the ball was held, there to await the moment of the company's departure.

"At last the ball broke up; and our parents hearing their carriages announced, hurried Mina and me forward. In the hurry, Mina's shawl was wrapt round me, and mine round her. We passed rapidly arm in arm up a long passage, Mina's mother being close behind her daughter. At this moment, while my father went forward to call his servants, an uplifted steel, which glittered in the expiring rays of one solitary lamp that lighted the door-way, flashed across our startled vision; and in an instant Mina, uttering a piercing shriek, fell backwards into her mother's arms. My father returned just as Mina fell; and seeing the dagger in Geraldi's hand, wrenched it from him, and seized the young assassin; while I, full of horror, hung over the body of my friend.

"Geraldi, whose face till then had expressed the malignant joy of satisfied revenge, now exhibited (I am told) an expression as terrible of defeated vengeance; and as they bore him to prison, he approached me, and said in my ear, with a look and in a tone that I can never forget, '*Je te retrouverai un jour.*'* I shudder while I repeat the ill-omened words.

"In a few days the wretched boy was tried, and convicted of the murder; but in consideration of his excessive youth his life was spared, and he was condemned to only twenty years' close imprisonment, with power vested in the judge of remitting five years of the punishment, should his conduct deserve it.

"My father was forced to attend the trial, as his evidence was the most material against him; and though Geraldi had attempted the life of his daughter, and still threatened it, my generous father could not help feeling excessive pity for the youthful assassin; especially, as he attributed the murderous blow to jealous love, absurd as it may seem to believe a boy of fourteen capable of that passion. He was therefore rather gratified when the sentence was imprisonment, and not death. But when Geraldi was asked by the judge, after pronouncing sentence, whether he did not repent of the crime which he had committed, he replied with great bitterness, that he did indeed repent that he had killed Mina Steinheim instead of Ethelind Manstein, as his revenge and his hatred remained unsatisfied; but he hoped to satiate both, one day. And when my father heard these words, and saw the look which accompanied them, he felt from that moment a fear for my life which scarcely ever knew a moment's repose. I, meanwhile, was in a state of nervous debility, the consequence of terror, and of sorrow for my childhood's beloved companion, and poor *Madame Steinheim* in the *state in which you see her.*

"Her son, a very worthless man and unna-

* I shall find thee again, one day.

tural child, hastened home from England on hearing of his sister's death and his mother's situation, and gladly acceded to my father's offer of taking his unconscious mother to live with us—young Steinheim insisting on our being paid for her board, and so on. But he soon after left Brussels, and in a very short time he spent all his mother's property and his own, and she became *dependent* on us. We, however, considered her not as a burthen; on the contrary, my father felt grateful to the lost Mina, for having, though unconsciously, saved the life of his child; and he looked on himself as bound to supply to her poor mother those affectionate attentions of which I had been the innocent means of depriving her. I will also venture to say, that as soon as I could bear to see her, and found she derived pleasure from my presence and my singing, my kind parents, so far from feeling her a painful charge on their generosity, experienced a benevolent gratification in witnessing the comfort which I administered; and I received her from them at their death, as a sacred and valuable legacy.

"But we all felt it to be impossible to remain at Brussels, and we even wished to remove to a great distance from it; accordingly we left Brussels and came to Ratisbon. Still my affectionate parents experienced incessant anxiety for my safety, and constant terror lest Geraldi should escape from prison; and I have feared that this anxiety shortened their days. They derived some satisfaction, however, from the precautions which they took; for, when they could not be with me, they never allowed me to walk out unaccompanied by Carlo (who was excessively attached to me, and whom I had brought up from a puppy,) and my old servant, Maurice, who was well acquainted with the face and person of Geraldi, and had a powerful arm, a determined spirit, and a well-tried courage. But alas! just as we were all, from the influence of time, forgetting the sad catastrophe which had so long afflicted us, my best and dearest protectors died, and I had not quite reached the age of one-and-twenty, when I became an orphan.

"In two years afterwards, however, their loss was abundantly supplied to me by my union with the best of husbands, who, previously to our marriage, went to Brussels, and to the prison in which Geraldi was confined, in order to judge for himself what frame of mind that wretched youth was in; and he told me, that on conversing with him, he expressed penitence for his fault; and on his assuring him that I felt the deepest interest in him and pity for his situation, and wished to know if I could send him any books to beguile some of his weary hours—he begged him to thank me for my unexpected kindness; but declared his resolution never to accept a favour from one whose life he had intended to take.

"This account quieted my fears for the future, if it did not wholly annihilate them; and when we heard that five years of his punishment were likely to be remitted, on account of his apparent penitence, and proper demeanour in prison, I did not deplore this proof of lenity, though I observed that Waldemar did.

"Well, my dear friends, I have nothing more to add. You know that the event anticipated with so much alarm and suspicion has taken place, and that my husband is absent. Now give me your advice; shall I recall him, or not? and what is your opinion of the degree of peril to which I am exposed?"

It cannot be supposed that Ethelind told this tale of murder and of danger without interruption and much overwhelming emotion; nor that her auditors heard it without observations of various kinds. But I thought it better to relate it without any breaks, in order not to interrupt the story.

When Ethelind had ended, her hearers had some difficulty to answer the questions which she had put to them. But at length they agreed that she should write to Waldemar, and inform him of the liberation of Geraldi; but assure him at the same time, that the guests whom he had left with her (with the addition of Mr. Meynell) would remain to guard her till his return.

In reply to her questions concerning the degree of her danger, they assured her that they thought Geraldi would not find it easy to discover her under the name of Waldemar, or at her present abode; and that it was to be hoped fifteen years of imprisonment, and the discipline of a prison, might have wholly eradicated the bad passions of a spoiled and petted boy, whose overweening conceit had been wounded by her disdain.

Ethelind wished to think as they did, but she could not. She thought that an imprisonment of that duration—that the consciousness the bloom of his youth had passed and faded in the walls of a prison, and that all the hopes of his manhood had been frustrated, and all the prospects of his young ambition closed on him for ever—would be enough to deepen the bitterness of resentment against her, as the cause of his degradation, and be likely to return him on the world again—while conscious that, like another Cain, he was branded as a murderer,—with his thirst for vengeance unsated and increased.

Ethelind believed that a *well-regulated* prison—a prison in which religious and moral truths were inculcated, and habits of industry enforced, might have reformed the heart, and ameliorated the temper of the culprit; and that when taught, that after having reconciled himself by penitence to his God, he might reconcile the world to him by a life of active virtue and benevolence, he might have been restored to society, penitent and reformed. But now, degraded, consciously degraded, in the eyes of man, and only too probably a stranger to his God — without friends, without em-

ployment, without support in this world, or hope, or dread of another—she feared that this poor victim of his passions was let loose upon society once more, probably with every bad passion strengthened, and every good feeling utterly annihilated.*

"However," thought Ethelind, with the confidence of heartfelt piety, "the same Providence which watched over me before, watches over me now; and without the leave of my Creator the hand of the assassin cannot reach me."

She wrote to Waldemar, and her friends also wrote. But her husband vainly wished to return to her as soon as he received her letter; for though he could not make himself believe her quite safe, unless he watched over her with the argus eyes of ever-increasing love, he could not leave his friend. And week after week passed heavily away, both with Ethelind and Waldemar, when he was able to say that he should return on the Monday of the next week, and just in time to bid his friends adieu; who could no longer delay their departure.

Waldemar had reason for fear which Ethelind knew not of; for though he spoke him fair when he saw him in the prison, he caught the expression of Geraldi's countenance as he turned away, and beheld in it every diabolical passion.

In the meanwhile inquiries concerning Geraldi had been made at Brussels; and it had been clearly ascertained that he had gone to the coast intending to embark with the first fair wind for America; and a Brussels gentleman had absolutely seen him on board ship.

This intelligence set the heart of Ethelind and of her friends entirely at rest; and she earnestly prayed for the safety and welfare of the self-exiled culprit.

The day for Waldemar's return arrived, but he came not; and his friends, who had ordered their carriages to the door, dismissed them after they had waited an hour or two, being resolved not to leave Ethelind (though neither she nor they had any fears remaining,) till Waldemar was actually in the house.

Ethelind, however, knowing the punctuality of her husband, and that he would not have written if he had not been sure of returning some time that evening, did not give up the hope of seeing him; and with the restless impatience of expecting love, she called Carlo to her, and set off intending to walk down the road along which Waldemar was to come. But she was not out of sight of the house when a rustling in the hedge startled her; and turning to look towards the spot, she thought she saw, nay, she was sure she saw, amidst the branches of a tree, two eyes fixed upon her, and that those eyes were "bright and terrible."

In one moment the reality and extent of her danger burst upon her mind; but that conviction gave her the fortitude of despair. She screamed not, because on looking around her she saw no one was in sight to protect and to save her; for Carlo, even Carlo, had wandered from her to play with another dog at a distance. She called him, however; but with a voice so changed by apprehension, that the dog disregarded it entirely; and while turning round to retrace her steps with the speed of frenzy, an agile limb bounded over the hedge, and Geraldi stood before her!

"Ha!" said he, seizing her trembling form with one hand, while the uplifted dagger threatened in the other, "*Je te retrouve enfin!*"*

At this moment, and while Ethelind was vainly struggling in his grasp, but, by seizing the wrist which held the dagger, had, for one single instant, perhaps, suspended the stroke of the assassin; and while she vainly rent the air with her cries, Geraldi felt himself seized by the calf of the leg; and as he turned round to see what assailed him, Carlo—for it was he who held him — let go his hold on the leg, to

* I must indulge myself with giving an extract here from Mr. Buxton's admirable book on *Prison Discipline*. Speaking of the consequences of a culprit's confinement in a prison, such as prisons generally are, he says:

"Seclusion from the world has been only a closer intercourse with its worst miscreants; his mind has lain waste and barren for every weed to take root; he is habituated to idleness, and reconciled to filth, and familiarized with crime. You give him leisure, and for the employment of that leisure you give him tutors in every branch of iniquity. You have taken no pious pains to turn him from the error of his ways, and to save his soul alive; you have not cherished the latent seeds of virtue; you have not profited by the opportunity of awakening remorse for past misconduct. His Saviour's awful name becomes, indeed, familiar to his lips, because he learns to use it to give zest to his conversation, and vigour to his execrations; but all that Saviour's offices, his tenderness and compassion, and mercy to the returning sinner, are topics of which he learns no more than the beasts which perish. In short, by the greatest possible degree of misery, you produce the greatest possible degree of wickedness; you convert, perhaps, an act of indiscretion into a settled taste and propensity to vice.

"Receiving him because he is too bad for society, you return him to the world impaired in health, debased in intellect, and corrupted in principles."

The events in this tale are supposed by me to have happened just before the French revolution; and though the prison of *Ghent* is, at this period, (as Mr. Buxton's statement proves,) a school of reform, and the prison at *Brussels* may now be the same, I have ventured to assume that it was the contrary at the time of which I have written, and the chances are that my assumption is only too just.

Mr. Howard declared the Ghent prison to be an excellent one before the French revolution; but I have not been able to obtain any information concerning the prison at Brussels. However, it is a fair inference, that had the prison at Brussels been worthy of praise, Mr. Howard would have praised it.

* I have found thee again, at last!

seize him by the throat. Geraldi was therefore forced to relinquish his hold on Ethelind, to defend himself from the enraged animal; while Ethelind was now able to scream for aid. Meynell and the servants, alarmed at the sound, came running immediately from the house; and Ethelind flew into the extended arms of the former, before Geraldi, whose dagger had been forced to some distance from him by the gripe of the dog, could free himself from the grasp of Carlo's teeth.

At length, however, seeing himself in imminent danger of being taken, he made a violent effort; and by giving the dog a blow which stunned him, he sprung over the hedge. Then, before any one could pursue him, he mounted a fleet horse which he had left in a neighbouring field; and though traced for some miles by the track of blood from the wound in his leg, that track suddenly ceased; and no vestige remained of Geraldi and his appalling visit, but the deadly faintness of Ethelind, and the enfeebled strength of the yet scarcely recovered Carlo.

Waldemar *did* arrive that night to find his adored wife in a sick-bed, and the house which he left a paradise become the scene of terror and of suffering. But the very sight of her husband soothed and cured the affrighted Ethelind; and while she hung in tearful agony round the neck of Waldemar, she said, with all the precious confidence of affection, "I know, I am *sure*, my beloved, that thou wilt never leave me again!"

"Never, never, if I can possibly help it," replied Waldemar, scarcely yet recovered from the shock which he had received. "But we must endeavour to remove the cause of our distress, by once more confining this relentless enemy; and I will spare no pains for his apprehension—no, not if it costs me half my fortune."

"My sufferings might have been greater, and may be so still," said Ethelind, with great tenderness. "I owe Geraldi unpayable obligation; for at present it is only my life that he aims at, and he might have attacked a life dearer far than mine—O my best love, beware how you personally provoke him!"

But no fears for himself could deter Waldemar from a just and spirited pursuit of the assassin; who contrived, however, wholly to defeat every plan for his discovery—a circumstance by no means wonderful or difficult, had they known the truth.

Ethelind, however, recovered her health and tranquillity; and the idea of leaving the house they now occupied, and removing to some distant province, was given up, as fear of the assassin gradually wore away; but it was only too soon resumed.

One evening Ethelind and two other ladies were sitting on a bank in the garden, behind which ran a hedge which divided it from the public road; when Carlo, who was near them, suddenly bounded forward at hearing a rustling in the hedge, and betrayed excessive agitation.

Ethelind instantly took alarm; but seeing her husband and the husbands of her friends in sight, she did not attempt to fly; but ascending the bank, she turned round to see what had so disturbed Carlo. And she immediately beheld him, after smelling about the hedge some time, spring over it, and disappear as she thought in a ditch on the other side.

In another instant she saw a man in the dress of a peasant flying, but evidently with difficulty, from the pursuit of Carlo. At this moment, however, a groom, (of whom Carlo was very fond,) returning along the road from the city, called him off from the chase of what appeared to him an old and lame peasant; and he came back quietly with his friend, though not without growling frequently, and looking back as if he had a mind to run off again.

As soon as the groom was near enough, Ethelind asked him why he had called off the dog. And he told her it was because the person he was attacking was a poor old peasant, a quiet and inoffensive person.

"Are you sure he was old?"

"O dear, yes! He had grey hair and beard, and stooped very much in his walk; not, indeed, that his eyes looked old, for they were the brightest I ever saw; and he looked as if he could have killed the dog."

"My good Walheim," replied Ethelind,—"have you forgotten that such is the description of the eyes of Geraldi Duval? and we have reason to believe he was hidden behind the hedge, and watching us, by the excessive agitation of Carlo, which ended in his springing into the road in search of him."

The groom, struck with the probability of the story, ran to the stable, mounted himself on one of the fleetest horses, and another of the servants did the same, and arming themselves, they went in pursuit of the peasant.

But they returned; having not only found no trace of the fancied peasant on the road, but having vainly sought a person of his description in the cottages on their way. Several cottagers had remembered to have seen such a one pass in the morning, but no one had noticed his re-appearance.

Still, as Waldemar, as well as Ethelind and their guests, was sure the supposed peasant was Geraldi lurking near them unseen, and on the watch for an opportunity of perpetrating his bloody design, it was judged proper for them to remove immediately to another abode, and as secretly as possible.

Alas! had they needed proof that Geraldi, like a spirit of evil, haunted their path, it was afforded them only too palpably the next day; for Carlo staggered into the room where Ethelind sat, surrounded by her children, and, crawling to the feet of his mistress, laid his head on her gown and died.

I may truly say, that bitter was the grief

which this event occasioned the affectionate family of Waldemar.

The children wept over the dead body of Carlo, "refusing to be comforted;" and Ethelind, in whose mind Carlo was associated with the image of parents ever loved and ever lamented, and who considered the poor dog not only as a faithful friend, and the preserver of her life, but as a constant memorial of her parents' anxious care, and as a sacred deposit which they had left to her tenderness, was overwhelmed at the moment with feelings which she could not express; but which, however, in the warm affectionate nature of her husband, met with alleviating sympathy.

But Waldemar soon ceased to yield to the enervating influence of even well-founded regret; for it was soon known, beyond the power of doubt, that Carlo had been *poisoned;* and on interrogating the groom mentioned before, he said he saw Carlo very busy in the ditch out of which he had seen the supposed peasant come, and that on going up to examine what he was doing, he found him greedily devouring a large piece of meat, from which he could not disengage his hold; and from that moment Carlo had evidently sickened.

It could not be doubted, therefore, that Geraldi had deposited the meat there, in order to deprive Ethelind of her powerful and attached defender; and it was also evident that the assassin, though unseen, was hanging over his innocent and devoted prey. Well, then, removal was indeed necessary, and their plans were immediately formed.

But it was not easy to decide whether it would be best for Waldemar and Ethelind to leave their present habitation in the night or in the day. However, as Ethelind declared that she would not go unless her children and Madame Steinheim went at the same time, it was necessary, she thought, for the sake of the former, that they should always set off at day-break, and stop as soon as it was dark. It was also judged right, that the servants should remain behind, one nurse-maid and Maurice alone excepted, till the travellers had fixed on their future residence.

So appalling was the consciousness, that they were hunted from their happy and present beautiful abode, by the demoniac vengeance of one wretched man, that even the firm nerves of Waldemar were shaken by it. But it was necessary that both he and Ethelind should avoid gloomy retrospects and gloomy foreboding, in order not to cloud over the innocent gaiety of their children, and deprive childhood, that season so distinguished by lengthened smiles and transient sorrows, of its proverbial brilliance and exemption from pain — exemption from all tears, but "the tear forgot as soon as shed."

They began their journey at day-break in a fine September morning, and they directed their course towards Hamburg, meaning to live there while fresh search was making for Geraldi, for the convenience of sailing for England, should fear compel them to leave their country. They travelled in two carriages; the first carriage containing Waldemar, Ethelind, Madame Steinheim, and two of the children; and the latter, Maurice, the nurse-maid, and the other children.

Their first day's journey was as pleasant as a journey, undertaken from such a cause, could be; and the pensive parents occasionally caught somewhat of the hilarity of their children; but they were usually watching every passenger on the road, and looking eagerly and anxiously into every vehicle they passed. Once a horseman passed them at full-speed, having previously, one of the children said, looked into the carriage; but at this moment, Waldemar and Ethelind were occupied in examining the foot of one of the boys which a thorn had penetrated; and the child who had seen this man look into the carriage, had scarcely said, — "Look, mamma!" when the horseman had clapped spurs to his horse and was out of sight; nor could the child give any description of him, which could at all warrant them to suspect that the man, who was now so rapidly disappearing before them, was Geraldi.

Having reached a small town just as the day closed in, they resolved to rest there that night; and as the evening was very fine, and poor Madame Steinheim had not had her accustomed exercise during the day, Ethelind led her into the garden of the inn, when she had seen her children in bed. This garden joined a public garden, which that night was lighted up for some particular occasion, while jollity and music sounded from booths and stages erected along the walks.

The *pauvre maman* gazed with unconscious fatuity on the lights before her. But Ethelind, as she opened a little gate which led to the public garden, contemplated it with some admiration, and felt impatient for Waldemar, who had promised to follow her, to come and admire it with her. But no sooner did her poor charge hear a female voice sing one of Mina's songs from a booth at a little distance, than her dull countenance lighted up with pleasurable emotion; and exclaiming, "*Ecoutez! voilà Mina qui chante!*"* she drew Ethelind forward towards the spot whence the sound proceeded; and Ethelind, though averse to enter the public garden, could not bear to deny this afflicted being the only enjoyment now left her.

Still she felt very reluctant to go on; and at last she contrived to make her restless companion stop before they reached the illuminated walks. On the side of Ethelind was a thick row of trees, in which shone a few scattered lamps; but they shed no light except on the object or objects immediately under them; —

* Listen! Mina is singing.

therefore Ethelind was conscious that she and her companion might escape observation; and, like her poor friend, she, too, listened with pleased attention to the music, till she even forgot to watch for her husband's appearance. But her attention was soon directed from the music, to a rustling sound behind the trees near her; and even her companion heard it also, and clung closer to her.

Ethelind turned towards the sound—her companion did the same; and in dress, in look, and in expression, like what he was in former days, (save that the boy was grown into the man,) Geraldi stood again before her, with his hand uplifted to strike her to the heart.

"*Tiens!*" burst from his quivering lip; and the stroke of death would have immediately followed, had not the helpless being whom he had deprived of a daughter, and of reason, recognised the murderer of that daughter; and throwing herself before the powerless Ethelind, exclaimed, in the shrill tone of frenzied agony, as she had done at Brussels, "*Mina! Oh, Mina! ma chère enfant! ma chère enfant!*"*

Her wild eye, her wan and sunk cheek, her meagre trembling form, and the consciousness that the sad change was owing to him—for he had heard the story of her miseries—palsied the arm even of this determined ruffian. The dagger dropped from his unnerved hand; and disengaging himself from the cold and clammy grasp of the attenuated fingers which had seized him, he took up the dagger again, and hastily disappeared along an unlighted walk; while Ethelind stood confounded, motionless, and nearly as wild as her agitated companion. But she was only too painfully recalled to recollection; the innocent victim of a ruffian's violence lay motionless before her on the ground, and Ethelind feared that the dagger had pierced her broken heart—feared that the mother as well as the daughter had been doomed to save her life by the loss of her own.

But as she knelt beside her, and examined her clothes, she saw that no wound had been given, for they were unstained with blood; and when Waldemar and Maurice approached, they found Ethelind trying to restore that animation, of which terror, she fondly thought, had alone deprived the pale object before her. But Waldemar and Maurice, while they gazed with agitated wonder, suspected that the poor sufferer was really dead; and they were right—the spirit was gone for ever; sudden terror, and anguish at the sight of her child's destroyer, had snapped the thread of life; and Ethelind's anxious endeavours were bestowed in vain.

"My dearest love," said Waldemar, "let us remove this unconscious being into the house, and there we will take every means to restore her."

"Ay, ay! do," replied Ethelind, in a tone that filled them with alarm; "ay, ay! he may return and that would destroy us both."

"Who may return?" said Waldemar, trembling, and forced to give Maurice the entire charge of the body.

"Geraldi! He has been here, and she knew him; she spoke to him; she awed and terrified him, and so she saved my life!"

All this was uttered with a voice too loud, a gesture too violent, and an eye too wild, to denote aught but temporary derangement in the usually gentle Ethelind. And as Waldemar led her into the house, he feared that though her life was again saved, her reason might be destroyed for ever.

But as soon as the body of her friend was laid on a bed, and means of restoring her were used, Ethelind busied herself so eagerly in superintending the operations, giving her own aid occasionally, that Waldemar's mind was a little relieved; though he was terrified at the probable result, when she should find that the sorely visited parent lived no longer.

Nor was it long before the conviction of this fatal truth forced itself on her mind; and bursting into an agony of grief, she threw herself on the bed beside her, and bathed her unconscious face with her tears. "Thank heaven!" exclaimed Waldemar, as he saw this salutary emotion; and wishing to increase it, he said, "Poor child of suffering! and thy life, too, has been the victim of this wretched man; but now he has been merciful; for, having deprived thee of all that made life valuable, for thee to die was indeed a blessing. Imbecile and joyless as thou wert, and rayless as thy mind was, I shall miss thee, dear insensible being! and so will my poor Ethelind. And oh! though I rejoice in thy deliverance from suffering, I grieve to think that I cannot by attentions, however unconsciously received by thee, show my sense of the obligation I owe thee for having been the means of saving my Ethelind's life."

As he uttered these words (which had the desired effect, and caused Ethelind's tears to flow with redoubled violence,) he lay down by the side of Ethelind; and as he pressed his cheek to hers, she felt that she did not weep alone. But soon after she exclaimed with almost frightful vehemence, "And shall I never see her smile on me again! and hear her exclaim, *Mina, chère Mina!* Shall I never again have the dear consciousness that my presence gave life and animation and happiness to an otherwise senseless, unconscious and wretched being!" So forcibly did Ethelind evince the truth of that well-known observation—that the strongest attachments spring from a conviction of the services we render, rather than that of the services we receive.

"But what then, dearest Ethelind! have you not now a much dearer consciousness—that of the poor sufferer's being entered on a happier stage of existence, and re-united to the

* My dear child!—my dear child!

child she had lost? Or, if that be not sufficient consolation for your sick heart, do you not believe, that if the *pauvre maman* could have had one hour of reason restored to her, she would have *chosen* the very death she met with; since that death saved your life, and repaid the debt she owed you for long, long years of ceaseless and watchful affection? Did ever child do her duty by a helpless parent, better than you have done by a being whose claims on you scarcely any heart but yours would have acknowledged? and is it not soothing to you to feel that the Almighty, as if in testimony that your pious care of this afflicted innocent has been an acceptable offering to him, graciously permitted the object of your kindness to reward it in the most effectual manner?"

Ethelind, whom the tender persuasions of her husband soothed into calmness even in spite of herself, did not answer, not only lest she should interrupt the soothings dear to her heart, but also because she was afraid that, if she owned herself consoled, she should be required to leave the chamber of death; and there she was resolved to watch all night.

But Waldemar now thought it time for her to retire to rest, after the double shock which she had undergone; he therefore proposed to her to go to bed in the very next room, while he watched all night by the body; and after some difficulty he succeeded in prevailing on her to oblige him. Nor was it long before his agitated wife fell into a deep sleep, and lost in salutary forgetfulness the sense of present grief, and future danger.

Not so salutary was the night of Waldemar; his hours of watchfulness were hours of misery also; and while he stole with noiseless step from the bed of slumber to the bed of death—while he gazed on the flushed and glowing cheek of his wife, and then on the pale and cold cheek of her now happy charge—he could not forget that but for the unconscious interference of the senseless frame before him, that face of living loveliness would now have been pale and cold as hers. He could not forget that his adored Ethelind was still exposed to a recurrence of that danger; and that the angel of death, hidden, as it were, in the shape of an earthly demon, was, though invisible, hovering over her path, and ready, when least expected, to seize and destroy her.

But what was to be done? and where, at that moment, was Geraldi?—and while he asked himself these questions, he was painfully impatient for the return of day, because he knew that Maurice and two of the ostlers had been out all night in pursuit of Geraldi, as the ostlers had seen a man answering to the description of Geraldi mount a horse at the door of the public garden, and gallop off at full speed along the road on which our travellers were to *have gone* in the morning.

But when morning came and Waldemar inquired for Maurice, he found that though they had certainly tracked Geraldi all the way they went, (as some passengers told them they had seen such a man,) the speed of their horses was so inferior to the speed of his, that they were forced to give up the pursuit and return.

This information perplexed Waldemar, as it made him think it imprudent to direct their course to that side of Germany towards which Geraldi had directed his; especially after he had put some questions to the nurse-maid, and received her answers. This woman had stood by the kitchen-fire, after the children were in bed, and till their mother had left them to lead the *pauvre maman* into the garden; and she remembered to have seen a tall dark-looking man, with singularly bright eyes, lounging against the door-stall; while she asked the landlord if the roads to Hamburg were good or bad, as they were going thither, and she disliked the idea of the journey. She also remembered that, as soon she had said this, the man went out at the front door of the kitchen; and then it was as he passed, that she saw his face and his singularly bright eyes, and asked the landlord who he was. He assured her he did not know; that he was not at their inn, but that his horse and he had put up at the house next him, where there was a public garden, and that there were very fine doings there that evening, which he probably had come to see.

From this account there was no doubt but that this man was Geraldi, and that he had learnt their route from this prating woman. Waldemar consequently determined to go a direct contrary way to what he first intended, and go into Bohemia; for, as Geraldi probably imagined they were going to Hamburg with a view of embarking for some other country, it was more likely, when he found they did not come to Hamburg, that he should suppose them gone to a seaport, than that they had gone further into the heart of the continent; and Ethelind, who was quite satisfied if she did not go along the road where Geraldi had been seen, was willing to abide by her husband's determination. She was not so willing to leave the body of her friend behind, but was forced to yield to unavoidable necessity. She had, however, the melancholy satisfaction of attending the masses said for her soul, and of following her to her humble grave, with her husband, her children, and her servants. Nor was Waldemar slow to promise that a tombstone should be put up, telling her name, age, and place of abode; and also informing the curious and sentimental traveller, that *there* a sufferer had found a place of rest.

Ethelind was therefore grateful and satisfied; and recovering the usual devout and Christian tone of her feelings, she joined with Waldemar in considering the death of Madame Steinheim as a mercy; and prepared, after

four days' residence at the inn, to set off for Bohemia.

The weather was fine, the roads consequently better than usual; and even earlier than they expected, our travellers reached Bohemia; nor did they meet with any alarm on the road, except whenever a horse passed them at full speed; and then they always expected to behold the dreaded form and the bright and terrible eyes of Geraldi.

It was not the first time that Waldemar had visited Bohemia, and he was well acquainted with the country; consequently he was at no loss where to seek a residence; and finding that a sort of castle, with a moat and a drawbridge, (which he used to admire) was to be let for a certain term of years, he took it immediately.

Those who had known Waldemar when he visited that neighbourhood before, were rather shocked at the change which they beheld in him; for constant anxiety lest his beloved wife should still be the victim of her relentless foe, had wholly altered his once bright and sunny countenance, and had imprinted on his manly brow the premature lines of age. Ethelind, too, lovely as she was, had a look of care and melancholy unnatural to her style of features; and her heavy eyelid and absent eye often showed, not as Marmontel says, that "*l'amour avoit passé par là*," — for her love had been a happy one; but that anxiety and sorrow had sojourned with her, and left sad traces of their destructive visit.

The children, however, were florid with the untamed vivacity of childhood, and bright with health and hope; still, even they, at times, were saddened by the restraints imposed on them; as they were not allowed to go out of their own domains, unless accompanied by Maurice, as well as another servant, and a large bull-dog, which had replaced poor Carlo; and even in their own grounds they were restricted to certain walks, where there were no trees to assist concealment; for Ethelind, who thought Geraldi's hatred was probably an increasing passion, was afraid that he might now wish to wound her in her most vulnerable part — through the bosom of her husband or her children.

Waldemar hesitated some time whether to make known the reason of his removal into Bohemia, or not; but at length he resolved to tell his sad and peculiar story. Every one loves to be an object of interest; and though we all admit that to be objects of pity implies a species of inferiority, still, who has not a strange sort of satisfaction in describing the pains and dangers of sickness, and the sufferings of the nerves of the heart? and who does not feel the auditor endeared to them, who has listened to such details with persevering attention, and patient sympathy?

But Waldemar was governed in the disclosure which he meditated, not only by this common though contradictory law of our nature; he thought that the more widely his wife's cruel persecution and injuries were known, the more likely he should be to entrap the author of them; and that all Bohemia would make common cause with him, should this terrible being ever be seen within its confines. Nor was he mistaken in his expectation of exciting by his narrative the deepest interest and the tenderest compassion; for the most distinguished inhabitants of the neighbourhood where his castle was situated, offered him every assistance in their power; and persons having authority promised to keep a very careful watch on all strangers who sought ingress into the towns nearest them.

Waldemar, however, was not aware of the evil springing out of this expected good, like the weed growing near the flower; for the knowledge of his painful situation induced many from kind, many from interested, and some from sinister motives, to send him real or supposed intelligence of Geraldi; and to entail on him thereby the expense not only of paying agents for going in pursuit of the villain according to the information given, but also to reward his often mistaken informants for their real or pretended good-will; an expense that in time became ruinous, and created an anxiety for the future in a pecuniary point of view, which was scarcely counterbalanced by the soothing consciousness that, though months had elapsed since they left their house, near Ghent, and had taken up their abode in Bohemia, no proof that their steps were still haunted by Geraldi (except the melancholy event at the inn on the road,) had during those months agitated their minds, and disturbed the quiet of their domestic enjoyments.

It was now in the month of June, and the genial brightness of the weather seemed to have a cheering and revivifying effect on the health and the minds of Waldemar and Ethelind. It appeared to strengthen the former, not to shrink from the necessity which seemed impending over him of curtailing his expenses, dismissing part of his household, together with his son's tutor and the governess to his daughters, whom they had lately added to their establishment; and, united with those months of freedom from alarm, it had so renovated the weakened frame of Ethelind as to encourage her to undertake once more the sole instruction of her girls.

During this season of unexpected and blissful security, Waldemar received a letter from a town about fifty miles off, telling him that a man answering the description of Geraldi was then lying apparently on his death-bed at a small inn in that place, and advising him to come himself, or send one competent to decide whether the invalid in question was the culprit, or not; and the letter was signed by the magistrate of the village.

It was impossible for Waldemar to disregard

this intelligence, as it was of the utmost consequence to him to ascertain the death of Geraldi, should the invalid prove to be him; and if he was not dying, and the information was correct, it was of equal consequence to him to secure his person while living.

His son's tutor had never seen Geraldi, consequently he could not go; and he could not send Maurice with the approbation of his own heart, because he was far from young, was just then very unwell, and not able to undertake with safety or comfort a journey of fifty miles. Therefore, though Ethelind gave an unwilling consent, Waldemar set off himself for the town in question. Before he went, however, he had a private conference with Maurice; who promised to sleep not only on the same floor with his mistress, but in a room that opened into the dressing-room belonging to her chamber; he also promised to see the drawbridge was drawn up all day, as well as night. Then with a feeling of tolerable security, Waldemar threw himself into his chaise and departed.

But when he was twenty miles on his journey his security vanished, and he could hardly help returning to guard in person his perhaps endangered treasure; for he met a man on the road, who, though he put his horse into full speed as he passed, and drew his hat over his face, had, in his opinion, the air and the eyes of Geraldi.

However, he recollected the power of nervous prepossession; and being determined to conquer his, he resolved to pursue his journey. He did not reach the place of his destination till the next day at noon; and what words can paint his agony and disappointment, when on inquiring for the person who wrote to him, and the inn to which he was directed, he found there was no such person, and no such inn! The wretched truth at once burst upon his mind — that he had been decoyed away from home by Geraldi, on purpose that during his absence he might find an opportunity of wreaking his vengeance on Ethelind. Immediately, therefore, he set off on his return home, as fast as four horses could bear him, in a state of mind wretched and hopeless.

The enforced and unusual absence of her husband was of itself a sufficient trial to the apprehensive Ethelind; but Waldemar was scarcely gone when she found that a new one awaited her. Her youngest child, a boy of about six years old, was seized with a feverish complaint; at midnight, Ethelind, who had taken her station for the whole night at the bed-side of this beloved object, was convinced that, if he was not better in an hour or two, she must send to the next town for immediate assistance. Towards one o'clock in the morning, however, he fell asleep; but not till Ethelind, in consequence of his pathetic complaints of the heat of the room, had unfastened one of the windows, and thrown it up as high as it would go.

Ethelind watched some time in sleepless anxiety beside the bed of her restless though slumbering charge; but, worn with anxiety, and exhausted by the heat of the weather, she at length threw herself on the bed, and soon forgot her cares and her dangers; but it was to wake to them again only too soon. For, suddenly starting up, at, as she thought, a noise in the room, she beheld Geraldi hanging over her; while those *bright* and *terrible* eyes gazed malignantly upon her, and his right hand seemed feeling for a dagger in his bosom.

"Thou art awake at last!" said Geraldi, in a deep and subdued tone, as if fearful of being overheard; "but be silent, or I will instantly kill thy child." And Ethelind, conscious that he was likely to keep his word, did nothing but lift her clasped hands to heaven in silent supplication, and look on him with an expression calculated to move the most obdurate heart.

But he had raised the murderous dagger against her life, when the little Ernest awoke; and seeing a strange man in the room, and having his head previously filled with the idea of Geraldi, he uttered, with a piercing shriek, the name of the *wicked Geraldi*, and begged him most piteously not to kill his mamma.

Instantly Geraldi, maddened and alarmed at the wild vociferations of the child, and the name of the wicked Geraldi, flew to the other side of the bed, and seizing the poor boy by the hair with his left hand, lifted up his dagger to strike him with the right.

But Ethelind, with all her power, seized and hung on that right arm; and, nerved by her maternal affection, the ruffian struggled in her grasp for a moment in vain. But that moment was sufficient. Maurice, ill as he was, had resolved to watch all night, as the dogs had barked, and he thought he had heard a strange splashing in the river. He therefore heard the screams of the child, and his repetition of the words, "wicked Geraldi," and concluding that, whether Geraldi was really there, or that the child was delirious, his presence would be cheering to the anxious mother, he softly unbarred the door, and reached the inner apartment just as the now exhausted Ethelind, uttering a faint cry for mercy, had nearly relinquished her hold on the arm of the assassin.

At that sight Maurice forgot his illness and forgot his age; and stealing behind Geraldi, and seizing his hand with his still athletic arm, he wrenched the dagger from him, and grasping him by the collar of his vest, he threw him, (not on the bed, as he hoped he should do, but) with great and stunning force against the opposite wall next to the window. Geraldi, being thus disarmed, and conscious of the great strength of his adversary, sprung out of the window with the agility peculiar to him, and mounting his horse which was grazing underneath, he swam it across the moat as he had done before, and having reached the oppo-

site bank in safety, was out of sight ere any one could hasten in pursuit of him.

But Ethelind was neither conscious of her own escape, nor to the disappearance of Geraldi. She was alive only to the danger of her child, who lay in her arms, in all the affecting struggles of a violent convulsion.

Maurice, meanwhile, was carefully fastening down the window again, lest Geraldi should re-arm himself again, and return; and then he endeavoured to assist the wretched mother to restore the child.

Nor were their efforts unsuccessful. The poor boy's struggles gradually subsided; and at length opening his eyes, and looking wildly around, he asked, in an inaudible voice, "where the bad man was?" Then seeing no one but Maurice and his mother, he sobbed out,—"Ernest and mamma are safe now;" and fell back exhausted in a calm sleep on the bosom of Ethelind; who, lying down with him in her arms, and feeling safe under the guardianship of Maurice, and the protection of that unseen guardian whose mercy she felt and whose goodness she acknowledged, she, too, yielded to the approaches of sleep. And Maurice, who watched over them till it was bright day-light, had the happiness of seeing both the mother and the son locked in a refreshing slumber.

Waldemar, in the meanwhile, who had travelled all night, was hastening home in anxious suspense almost too powerful for his reason; and his powers of utterance were quite suspended, when he rang at the gates of the park, and no servant came to open them. Nor, when he stopped at the gate of his house, did he behold any signs of anxious expectation or eager welcome, and his heart died within him—for he knew that he had been led from home by a false pretence; and he now more than suspected that he had met Geraldi on the road!

"It looks—it *is*," said he, "no doubt the abode of death and desolation—and the bloody deed is accomplished!"

At this moment one of the post-boys dismounted, and opened the carriage door; and Waldemar, fancying himself firm when he was only desperate, staggered into the hall of entrance; when suddenly at an opposite door appeared Ethelind and three of his children, flying on the wings of affectionate transport to his arms. The contrast was too much for human nature to support.

Waldemar struggled against the tide of emotions which overwhelmed him—but it could not be. His head turned, his eyes closed, and he was conscious of nothing more till he found himself lying on a sofa, his head supported by Ethelind, and his pale and tearful children gazing intently upon him.

"It was a false alarm! and I see that I am still surrounded by blessings," exclaimed Waldemar, hiding a few weak tears, as he thought them, on the shoulder of Ethelind. "But you must own the house looked strangely desolate? and fearing, as I had reason to do, that Geraldi had been here——"

"Who told you so, papa?" exclaimed the three children at once. "Oh! yes, and poor little Ernest—"

"What of Ernest?—and where is he?" replied the now alarmed Waldemar.

An immediate explanation ensued; and Waldemar also learnt why no one was near to receive him. Ethelind, when she awoke and remembered the transactions of the preceding night, was convinced that the letter to Waldemar was a trick to lure him from home; and knowing how alarmed he would consequently be, on finding out the trick, and in what an anxious state of mind he would travel back—she despatched the only groom they now had to meet Waldemar, twenty or thirty miles, if possible, from home, and let him know of Geraldi's visit and her safety; but the postilions had come by a shorter road than the usual one, and the groom had therefore missed them.

Maurice, meanwhile, had gone to bed in the day, to make amends for the exertions of the night; and just as Waldemar arrived, Ethelind was putting Ernest in a warm bath; while the governess, the nurse-maid, and the other children, assisted at the ceremony, and the tutor was taking his daily walk.

But now all these unfortunate coincidences and every thing was forgotten, in the joy of the re-union under circumstances of such signal deliverance. And Ethelind, almost convinced that she bore about "a charmed life," chided Waldemar for the intention he expressed of guarding every window on the outside with that expensive defence, a *chevaux-de-frise* of iron.

This certainly was unnecessary, if the windows were constantly closed. But as Ethelind might wish to open a window in a hot night, if he was ever absent again, Waldemar thought it would be money well laid out; and the order was given.

Waldemar had now been home some weeks; and the feeling—the too often baseless feeling—of security was rapidly returning, when a most unexpected piece of intelligence filled their hearts with gladness, and lifted them up to heaven in pious thankfulness.

The newspapers announced that, Geraldi Duval, whom the officers of justice had been in pursuit of so long, was at last discovered and taken, together with several others belonging to a company of banditti whom he had joined, and that he was then in prison at Altenburg; where, in a few months, he and his accomplices would be tried, not only for robbery, but murder.

The first perusal of this paragraph filled the minds of this persecuted family with the liveliest joy. But Waldemar and Ethelind, made wary by experience, soon found their hopes fade and their fears revive; and before they again opened their hearts to rejoicing, they

resolved to send over to Altenburg, to see whether Geraldi was really confined there. And Maurice was now able to undertake the journey.

He went—and returned with the joyful intelligence, that he had seen Geraldi chained and in prison; and had received from him many hearty curses, uttered with the look of a fiend.

O the joy of that moment to his long persecuted, though patient and resigned victim! A load was taken off her heart, which, unconsciously to her, was wearing her frame away.

Still, a feeling of insecurity would return when she remembered that Geraldi was connected with banditti, who would, very likely, make incredible efforts to set their comrades free. Nor could she sometimes rest till Maurice had again visited Altenburg, and again seen Geraldi.

Three times had he gone on this not unpleasant errand — for his heart (like his lady's) often misgave him on this subject — when the fourteenth anniversary of the day of Waldemar's marriage with Ethelind drew near, and he was resolved to celebrate it by a sort of village festival. But before he dared throw open his gates to every one in the village, and bid all his anxious fears farewell, he sent Maurice over to Altenburg again, to ascertain the continuance of Geraldi's captivity; and, if he could, the probable security of the prison locks and walls.

He found Geraldi even more closely ironed than before, as it was discovered that he had meditated an escape; and Maurice was therefore more at ease concerning the probable duration of his imprisonment than he had hitherto been; and he returned with gladness in his own heart, to gladden the hearts of others.

"Then we need hesitate no longer," said the happy Waldemar: "Now shall my gates be as open to my poor and rich neighbours as my heart as long been!" And immediately preparations for the festival were begun.

The children, accompanied by their governess and the tutor, had been permitted, ever since the apprehension of Geraldi, to walk out of the grounds into the adjacent country; and Ethelind had allowed them to be themselves the distributors of the bread, or the money, or the linen, or the medicine, which she sent to the poor cottagers around her; for she never forgot others, even in trifles, however oppressed she was herself; and but for her own fears, and her husband's prohibition, she would have been known to these objects of her bounty in person; but the habitual fear that Geraldi might be on the watch for her, had made her quietly submit to keep entirely within her own precincts.

The day before that fixed upon for the festival, the governess and the little Waldemar had seen a ragged girl begging near the gates, and they gave her a piece of money, because she assured them she begged for her poor grandmother, who was dangerously ill in that cottage, (pointing to the one nearest to her.)

"I will go in and see your grandmother, then," said the governess; "and if she is very ill, the kind lady who lives yonder will send her something to do her good."

The young girl thanked her warmly for her kind offer, and ran on before to announce the visit.

The governess followed, and saw an old woman sitting almost double over a few pieces of wood which she had just lighted, and seeming too ill to take any notice of her visiter.

"Are you feverish?" said the governess, "that in so hot a day as this you want a fire to warm you?"

At the sound of her voice the old woman started and turned round, but instantly resumed her posture without answering; and the girl observed, she was too deaf to understand what any one said unless the words were spoken in her ear. The governess, therefore, stooped down, and spoke the question in her ear. The old woman then heard; and swinging backwards and forwards, as if in great pain, said, "No, I am not feverish, only in great suffering—something bad inside, I fear." And the compassionate governess promised that some sort of relief should be sent her. Then assuring her she should see or hear from her again, she went in search of Ethelind, who, moved to pity by the account, exaggerated as those of childhood usually are, which her children gave of the poor old woman's sufferings, age, and apparent poverty, sent her cordials and medicine, promising to come and see her herself, if she was not better the next day.

But the next day was the day of the festival, and even Ethelind forgot her promise in preparations for her guests.

The sun shone brightly on the anniversary of a marriage which had been the cause of happiness, pure and uninterrupted, except by a malignant spirit, clothed in earthly form; and the whole park looked bright and gay with booths and flags, and streamers on the hats of the peasants, and flowers in the hair of their wives and daughters,—while music was heard from near and distant groups; and the cheerfulness and hilarity which were visible on every face, gratified the benevolent hearts of the lord and lady of the castle.

"This reminds us of former days, dearest Ethelind," said Waldemar; "days when no Geraldi had as yet crossed our path and poisoned our enjoyments."

"May these happy days continue!" cried Ethelind, sighing, and hastening to meet some friends just arrived from Prague. Her guests continued now to arrive so fast, that Ethelind was forced to resign every thought but of their accommodation; and she passed rapidly with

her light and graceful step along the busy and crowded scene.

As soon as an inspiring waltz was played, the higher order of Ethelind's guests chose their partners and formed their own circles, while the lower orders, at a respectful distance, did the same; and Ethelind, laughing at her own unfashionable taste, selected her husband for her partner, saying, "that now she never waltzed with any one but Waldemar or her children;" while the gratified husband, enfolding with fond pride her still lovely person, bore her along the animating circle.

When Ethelind paused to recover breath, she cast a gratified eye over the scene before her. Festoons of pinks and roses had now been hung on different groups of trees, wherever the ground was level; and some of the dancers flew along the circling waltz, their round marked out by bands of fragrant flowers; while the lofty trees over their heads screened the dancers from the heat of a noon-day sun, and waved in deeper verdure from the gay contrasts beneath them. Ethelind's full heart spoke in her glistening eye as she gazed on this cheerful scene of innocent enjoyment; and she felt thankful for the consciousness that she and Waldemar were allowed thus to amuse the friends who were dear to them, and to reward the industry of the peasants by a day of happy but not unproductive idleness; for Waldemar, being resolved not to injure those whom he amused, meant to bestow on each family what they would have earned during the day, though during that day they lived at his expense.

But why did Ethelind start, and a cloud come across her brow, as she looked over the merry throng? Peeping through the iron gate at the bottom of the park, she saw the shoeless girl of the cottage looking, no doubt with envy, at all that she beheld. Ethelind instantly, with a feeling of self-reproach, remembered that, though she had heard the old woman was worse, she had not fulfilled her promise of visiting her; and now that her power of attending the sick in person was restored to her, it was *so very wrong*, she thought, not to have profited by it.

No sooner had the unusual feeling of self-reproach on such subjects arisen in the mind of Ethelind, than it was necessary to remove the intruder, by fulfilling the neglected duty; and withdrawing unperceived from the throng after the waltz was over, she threw a veil over her head, and, accompanied by the governess, stole out of the gate, bade the girl lead the way, and followed to the cottage.

Ever as much averse to ostentation as she was prone to real charity, Ethelind took no relief with her except money, as that she could carry unseen in her pocket. But recollecting that the poor woman's disorder was said to be violent pain, she sent the governess back for an opiate—and entered the cottage alone.

The errand was one of charity, and her look and the tone of her voice were those almost of a ministering angel; and she had just closed the door after her, when her children, who had become much interested in the old woman, reopened it, and begged to be allowed to stay on the threshold. Ethelind only nodding assent, stepped forward to the bedside of the old woman, whose face was shaded by something resembling a hood.

The tutor now joined the group at the door, returning from his accustomed walk; and Ethelind, who kindly thought that the children and he made too much noise at the door for the invalid, was just going to beg him to lead them further off; when looking towards her, she saw her raise her head suddenly and cast an angry glance towards the tutor, who now entered the cottage.

Ethelind's look immediately became riveted on those eyes so expressive of vengeful malignity; and swift as the flash of lightning the truth burst upon her mind. There was no time for deliberation. She rose suddenly from the side of the bed, along which she had thrown herself in order to speak in the ear of the deaf invalid, and approaching the tutor, told him that she wished to converse with him apart; but when she reached the threshold she called on her children to follow her, nor stopped till she found herself in the arms of Waldemar, who, directed by the governess, was come in search of her. Ethelind did not, could not utter a word; but her pale cheek and altered countenance spoke volumes to the apprehensive husband.

At length, however, she recovered her utterance; and declared that in the feigned old woman whom she went to succour, and if possible to save, she had, by the *bright* and *terrible* eyes discovered Geraldi!

Waldemar instantly sprang from her detaining arms, and ran to the cottage; but Geraldi was already fled! He had suspected that Ethelind had discovered him; and throwing off his woman's apparel, he, ready dressed for flight, jumped through a window near the bed, mounted the horse in readiness, and made his escape.

Waldemar was immediately surrounded by a band of friends, followers, and grateful peasantry, offering to join in pursuit of the villain who had thus endeavoured to make an act of mercy the means of destroying the performer of it.

"But surely my foe was kind there," said Ethelind, smiling through tears; "while engaged in an act of mercy, was it not the best time to appear before the throne of mercy?"

"What can we do?" said Waldemar;—"whither shall we go in pursuit of him? Over my beloved Ethelind's life I am inclined now to believe he has no power, but over our daily comfort, much. No, my kind friends, I thank you; but till I have communed with the magis-

trates, I will not accept your proffered services, nor take any steps whatever, except that I will secure the cottage girl. In the meanwhile, continue your rejoicings, now changed in their cause. Rejoice now for my dear Ethelind's fourth deliverance from danger and from death! Yet no," added Waldemar, deeply sighing,—"I summon you all to join me previously in thanksgiving; and I invite you to follow me to the chapel."

The priest was at hand; and the lord and lady of the castle, in the midst of their children and the thoughtless crowd which they had gathered together for other purposes, bent in humble thankfulness before the throne of grace, for the signal deliverance from danger and from death of the beloved wife, the tender mother, the adored mistress, and the accomplished friend.

"I believe," said Ethelind, as she arose from the affecting service, "I believe that this has been the most touching yet gratifying moment of my life."

But few were the moments of joy which succeeded it. The gardens were lighted up, the festivities continued; but Ethelind, by her husband's desire, and even by her own, was a prisoner in the house, and was never left but with friends to guard her—for was not the destroyer loose again?—and nothing satisfactory could be gained from the girl, who, though she must have been privy to Geraldi's disguise, might not have been the confidant of his bloody designs, but might have even been the unconscious agent of his artifice.

And probably, indeed, she was so. It was likely that he escaped from prison, and assumed as soon as he escaped the dress of an old woman; and so disguised he might meet the wandering girl; and having hired the cottage, might prevail on this girl to live with him under the name of his grand-daughter. And so artlessly did the girl describe her alarm and astonishment at seeing the seeming old woman, on Ethelind's departure, jump out of bed, tear off her woman's clothes, and appear equipped *en cavalier*, and, then sticking a dagger in his girdle, jump out of the window, that Waldemar believed her entirely innocent of the worst part of the deception; and she was set at liberty immediately.

It was now evening; and fire-works concluded the entertainment. But now, alas! there could not be a greater contrast to the gaiety of their guests, than that exhibited by the appearance of Waldemar and Ethelind; and glad indeed were they when the midnight bell sent all to their respective habitations.

The morning rose—but not to them with that welcome brightness with which they had expected to greet it; for it awoke them to care, to anxiety, and to the painful consciousness that they were again going to be involved in expenses which must at length force them to those further retrenchments in their mode of living, of which the imprisonment of Geraldi had, they hoped, precluded the necessity.

Ethelind, indeed, wished Waldemar to take no steps himself to discover her enemy, but leave him to be sought after by the magistracy, for their own sakes, as it was for robbery and murder that he had been imprisoned once, and he might be found and imprisoned again. But Waldemar could not rest, unless he, as a husband, took every means in his power to put a stop to the danger of a wife so justly beloved; and he was resolved to make every other consideration yield to that.

Full of anxious deliberation, therefore, he wandered into the silent park, so lately echoing with innocent mirth, and gazed with a look of painful consciousness on the scenes around. "We were so happy here yesterday!" he exclaimed; "and now—!" As he spoke, his eye rested on the faded flowers which hung drooping on the trees on which they had so lately bloomed; and Waldemar felt that the hopes which hung them there had now faded like them. Still his heart reproached him for every murmur as it rose, since the life of Ethelind had been again preserved; and gratitude and faith commanded him to trust the future and the present to the care of that Providence which had so often saved her.

"But human means of safety must not be neglected," said Waldemar; and in a few hours he had not only convinced Ethelind that it would be the wisest plan to reside in Prague in future, because she would be less exposed to attack there, but because the expenses of living would be less in a city—and preparations were begun for removing thither, as soon as a house could be procured. The governess and the tutor, also, to their great grief, were to be discharged; and Waldemar and Ethelind dismissed as much of their household as circumstances admitted of; for, like provident and wise persons, they thought it better to contract their expenses while the necessity for so doing was not absolutely pressing on them.

It was, however, a trial to them all to leave their beautiful residence and live in a city; and they still hesitated to fix a day for taking possession of their new abode; when Waldemar and Ethelind, accompanied by Ethelind's brother, who was on a visit to them, set out to take their last walk round the extensive grounds.

A ha-ha separated one part of the park from a hedge, on the other side of which was the road; and while her brother was standing a little way from them, pointing out a particularly fine tree to Waldemar, who was pressing forward to look at it, the report of fire-arms was heard close to them; and a bullet whizzing past Ethelind so nearly as to touch her hat, fell a few paces off.

The same conviction instantly forced its way on the mind of all three; Geraldi had aimed that bullet, had failed, and would aim

again! In an instant, therefore, Ethelind's brother flew out of the gates of the park, though hopeless of securing the assassin. But Waldemar, clasping his arms round Ethelind, and bending over her as she lay in powerless terror, unable to remove from the spot, exclaimed,—"Now fire, barbarian, if you will!" and awaited in helpless suspense the menacing destruction. But Geraldi, though prepared to fire again, had been forced to fly as soon as he had fired his first pistol, as he saw a troop of horse approaching at full speed, and had only just time to mount his fleet Arabian, and gallop into the neighbouring forests, to the safe shelter of the caverns there—consequently all that Manstein saw on running to the hedge, was a man on horseback disappearing in the distance, who had, no doubt, fled on seeing the troop advancing.

But what a change, a mournful change did this event make in the feelings of this afflicted family! While Geraldi attacked the life of Ethelind with a dagger only, he could not assail it unless she was alone, and he was in actual contact with her; but with a pistol he could take distant aim, and might in time succeed in his attempt. All feeling of security, therefore, seemed now vanished for ever, except Ethelind doomed herself to perpetual seclusion, and gave up the necessary enjoyments of air and exercise! This circumstance reconciled her, however, entirely to a residence within the walls of a city; though she felt it painful to reflect that, unless Geraldi were once more taken and then executed, it would be impossible for her ever to leave that city in perfect safety again; nor was the journey to it wholly devoid of danger to herself and her husband.

That journey took place the next morning. Manstein, armed, rode on one side of the carriage which held Waldemar and Ethelind, (who, fearing for their children, chose to travel alone,) and Maurice, armed, rode on the other; while Waldemar, having wrapped a thick mantle over Ethelind's person, and reclined her head on his bosom, clasped his arms closely round her; and bidding the postilion drive at full speed, exclaimed, "Now, Ethelind,—now, my beloved, no bullet can reach thee but through my heart."

"Is that said to comfort me!" replied Ethelind, reproachfully; and she experienced not one moment of peace till they had entered Prague, and were safe within their own house.

Months of quiet succeeded, as Ethelind never went out; but months of increasing demands on their now impoverished purse, from the means Waldemar took to effect the seizure of Geraldi; while constant anxiety fevered the frame, and utterly destroyed the bloom and the cheerfulness of Waldemar. Ethelind, too, though for his sake she endeavoured to keep up her spirits, felt borne to the earth by the consciousness that she was an object marked out for destruction by an unrelenting assassin; while a degree of poverty, which long habits of affluence had ill prepared her to meet, was in the back-ground of every picture which she drew of the future hour—and she often gazed on her children with anxious though unavailing borebodings.

Still, when she saw those children preserved to her — when she found that the hand of the assassin had never aimed at the life of her husband, (for even the bullet had exclusively been directed at her,) she felt gratitude unutterable again take possession of her heart; and she owned, in its deepest recesses, that misery cannot long remain where the exercise of the affections exists in its fullest force; and though she was unable to mix in the world as formerly, with what comforts and with what blessings was she not surrounded at home!

But Ethelind had not, as I said before, to fear for the life of any beloved object. The case was different with Waldemar; and in proportion to his affection for Ethelind, was the force of his anxiety and the destructive power of his incessant fear.

Poverty with Ethelind he could endure; but should she die at last by the hand of the assassin, and he, in fruitless attempts to save her, have impoverished his children — what then would be his fate, and what his agony! Still, he humbly endeavoured to teach his soul a lesson of resignation; and when he least expected it, his situation was altered.

A distant relative died, from whom he expected nothing, and left him not only a very considerable fortune, but an estate near Brussels, with a large mansion belonging to it; and but for the dread of Geraldi, thither Waldemar would have removed directly; for Ethelind would have made it her duty to conquer her aversion to return to that spot where all her sorrows had originated. But Waldemar dared not expose the life of Ethelind again to the dangers of the road; and he was forced to content himself with sending an agent to look over the premises, and take all the necessary steps.

The terror of poverty for her children was now removed from the mind of Ethelind, and she regained her health and her tranquillity; but not so the anxious and affectionate Waldemar; for he felt that increased riches would impart no happiness to him, if he were deprived of Ethelind; and that, as he could not enjoy any good which was unshared by her, even this augmentation of fortune lost its charm, because the life of Ethelind was still threatened.

At this time of still-increasing anxiety to Waldemar, the public papers announced that Geraldi Duval and one of his associates in iniquity, who had escaped to England from the pursuit which had long been making after them, and had taken up their abode in London, had killed two men there in a drunken fray;

and that, being taken in the fact, they had been committed, and would be tried the next week.

I will not attempt to describe the joy of Waldemar at this intelligence, though it was of a mixed nature; for it was painful to his benevolent heart to be forced to rejoice at the probable death of a fellow-creature; and Ethelind, spite of her wrongs, mourned over the impending doom of that being whose youthful hopes she had been the innocent means of blasting.

"But is this intelligence true?" said Ethelind; and Waldemar echoed the words.

"I will soon know," said he. And he wrote immediately to Mr. Meynell, (the Englishman mentioned in the beginning of this tale,) who was in London, and begged him to ascertain the truth of the statement in the paper.

At length, after what appeared to them a tedious interval, a letter from Meynell arrived; and was as follows:

"I have the happiness to tell you that the news is true. As soon as I received your letter, I hastened to London from my country residence, where I then was, and went to Newgate; and on inquiry I found that Geraldi Duval was the name of one of the men confined on a charge of murder. I then begged leave to see this man, whom, though I had only seen at a distance while struggling with poor Carlo, I was almost sure that I should know again. I *did* see him, and I had no doubt of his identity with your determined foe.

"'Is your name Geraldi Duval?' said I.

"'Why do you want to know?' he replied in French.

"'I am the friend of Madame de Waldemar,' I replied, significantly.

"'Then you know,' he answered, with the look of a demon, 'that Geraldi Duval is her eternal enemy—Are you answered now?'

"'I am.'

"And I left him with a lightened heart. The next day he was tried, and condemned; and at this time he is preparing for execution. Hateful as such sights are, I, for your entire satisfaction, am resolved to see him *dead*.——

"I am returned—sick at heart—but no matter, as you will now be as happy in future as you deserve to be.

"I saw Geraldi *die*—I saw him DEAD! Would I could tell you that he died apparently penitent! But he seemed to reject the priest's attendance; and Geraldi discovering me in the crowd, gave me a look of such malignant and ambiguous meaning, as I cannot explain to myself; but he is dead. Farewell! I hope to visit you when you go to your new abode," &c. &c.

"Then he *is* dead! and we shall be happy again," exclaimed Waldemar. But Ethelind, overcome by a variety of emotions, could not articulate one word, but sunk nearly insensible into the arms of her husband; nor did she regain her composure till, prostrate at the foot of the altar, she breathed forth all the feelings of her pious soul at the throne of her preserver.

Her next step was to desire constant masses to be said for the soul of the impenitent Geraldi.

"Now, then," said Waldemar, "we may venture to go to Brussels." And Ethelind assented; but she heaved a deep sigh, while she thought of Mina and her mother. Preparations were immediately begun for their removal, and after a pleasant journey the travellers reached Brussels; nor was it long before they were settled in their new abode, and once more happy.

True, they had left many dear and attached friends in Bohemia; but then Ethelind found her brother and his family, and the friends of her childhood, at Brussels; and but for one fatal event, all her recollections of Brussels and its environs would have been full of tenderness and pleasure. However, in spite of one painful remembrance, Ethelind enjoyed the prospect of making Brussels her future residence, as she found the memory of her parents and herself was still precious in the hearts of their former companions.

The first thing which Ethelind and Waldemar did, on taking possession of their new territory, was to cause a strict inquiry to be made into the wants of the poor inhabitants around them; and their next, to relieve those wants for the present, and take means to prevent a recurrence of them in future; and thus, by making the great possessions which devolved on them, a blessing to others, prove their deep sense of the mercy which had been so recently shown towards themselves.

Ethelind's next desire was to have the body of poor Madame Steinheim taken up, and removed to Brussels, to be interred there by the side of her murdered daughter; a desire, of which Waldemar immediately took means to secure the fulfilment; and leave being granted, it was not long before the mortal remains of the sorely visited mother were united to those of her child, in the Cathedral church at Brussels, where Waldemar caused a plain marble monument to be erected over them, in order to commemorate their virtues and their fate.

The persons sent to convey the body to Brussels, told this remarkable anecdote on their return, namely, "that a few days after Waldemar and Ethelind had left the inn, the grave of Madame Steinheim had been found strewed with flowers; and on a piece of paper, which was found fastened into the sod by a stick, were written these words;—'A tribute of regret, deep, but, alas! unavailing.' On inquiry, it was ascertained, that one morning at day-break, a tall and majestic-looking man had been seen to leave the church-yard, hiding his face with his hands, had instantly mounted

a very fleet steed, and had disappeared directly." They added, it was supposed, at the inn, that this man was GERALDI DUVAL.

"I have no doubt of it," said Ethelind, rejoiced to find any proof of proper feeling in her powerless enemy; now powerless before the Most Powerful! — now undergoing, from a Judge that cannot err, the punishment due to his crimes.

"Yet, how inconsistent is it," said Waldemar, "for the same man who pursued your life with unrelenting hatred, to feel so much for the unintended murder which he perpetrated?"

"But *they* never offended him — *I* did; and I own to you that this little trait of discriminating feeling has been a balm to my wounded spirit. But it has made me deplore more than ever, that any consideration withheld my beloved father from endeavouring, by some means or other, to reform Geraldi, and from trying to convert an enemy into a friend. My dearest husband, unfortunate circumstances made Geraldi what he was, and turned the milk of human kindness in his nature into gall. Think how hard a trial it must be, for an aspiring youth like him to see all his prospects close at fourteen, and to look forward to a long life, deprived of every hope founded on virtue! Peace to his soul!"

And at Brussels, as well as at Prague, Ethelind ordered masses for the soul of Geraldi Duval.

"If they do nothing for the soul of Geraldi, sweet enthusiast," thought Meynell, (who was now on a visit at Brussels,) "they will do much for yours." But he kept his implied heresy to himself, respecting Ethelind's true piety too much to utter what he thought.

Waldemar and Ethelind now imagined themselves happily settled at Brussels for life. Accordingly, they received the visits of their friends, visited them in return, and made acquaintances for the sake of their children, who would, in two or three years, be introduced into the world. But Ethelind's mind had been weaned, by the trials she had undergone, from any thing that came under the description of public amusements or public balls, and she had a decided aversion to appear at them; especially, as the remarkable events of her life were too generally known not to make her an object for the gaze of curiosity.

But Waldemar was apprehensive lest she should carry her acquired love of retirement too far; and that when her children wanted her guidance into the world, she would find, from long disuse, that duty painful which otherwise it would be pleasing to her to perform. Accordingly he resolved to combat it as much as he could, though with gentleness. And not long after the monument had been erected to the memory of Madame Steinheim and of Mina, and when whatever had a tendency to recall past pains had therefore ceased to be agitated, Waldemar told Ethelind that he had a favour to request of her.

"Look upon it as granted, then," she replied, smiling.

But Waldemar shook his head, and told her he was by no means certain that his victory was so assured.

"Can I refuse any thing you wish?" replied Ethelind, with quickness.

"*Nous verrons.*" And Waldemar explained his business.

He told Ethelind that an old friend of his, the Count de Friberg, whom some untoward circumstances had made his enemy, but who was lately reconciled to him, and he trusted for life, was come to reside at Brussels, and was going to give a grand ball on his eldest son's coming of age. "And," added he, "though I know your aversion to such scenes, I ventured to say I hoped you would oblige me and gratify the children by accepting his invitation?"

"The children! Are they invited?"

"O yes, it is a child's ball, also; and the children are to have their own ball-room to themselves, and their own supper. Their parents and others are to come in fancy dresses, with masks, or in characters, or in dominos."

"A masked ball, too! No, no, indeed, I cannot, cannot go to it."

"But I will not go without you; and if I stay away, my friend will fancy my reconciliation with him is not sincere, or I should have had pleasure in bearing so public a testimony to our renewed intimacy; for it was at Brussels, just before I knew you, that we quarrelled, and our difference was generally known. Then the children, too, would be sorry not to go, as most of their young friends will be there; and Madame de Friberg and her little girls are coming to call on you to-day."

To be brief, Ethelind gave at last a reluctant consent, saying, "But allow me to tell you, I go because it is your desire that I should go; and it is a wife's duty, and it is always my pleasure, to obey my husband."

The appointed evening arrived; and Ethelind in a fancy dress, and Waldemar in a blue domino and mask, entered the carriage to convey them to this ball, accompanied by their two eldest children.

"Where does the Count de Friberg live?" said Ethelind.

Waldemar informed her; but added, "We are not going to his house; the ball is held at some public rooms."

"I wonder at which of the public rooms?" said Ethelind, turning very faint, as she recollected the last ball that she had attended at public rooms in Brussels. But Waldemar could not tell her. All he knew was, that the entrance to it was at a splendid portico in such a street, (mentioning the name of it,) and Ethelind's mind was immediately relieved.

When they arrived at this portico, they

found it not only splendid in architecture, but from the blaze of lights which adorned it for the occasion; and Ethelind saw nothing to remind her of the rooms of former days. Still she could not enjoy the scene around her; she could not but remember that her daughters were within two years as old as she was when she went to that ball which had so fatally influenced her future life; and she trembled lest some unforeseen occurrence, as unforeseen as the event which she recalled had been to her, should cloud over the bright morning of their days, and make her suffer again in the persons of her children. But Ethelind, who hung on Madame de Friberg's arm (a lady with whom she was excessively pleased,) felt it incumbent on her to drive away those saddening, and, probably, ill-founded fears, and *look* the gaiety which she *felt* not.

That evening Waldemar, for the first time in his life, left the side of Ethelind. He quitted her in order to indulge himself in the amusement of talking in a feigned voice to those whom he knew under their disguises, and of occasioning them a sort of impatient but vain desire to know who he was — an amusement well known to frequenters of masquerades. His unusual desertion, though perfectly excusable, did not tend to raise her spirits; and long ere the festive crowd around felt the slightest wish to disperse, Ethelind sighed to return to a scene more congenial to her; and nothing but her dislike to vex Waldemar prevented her from begging to retire, as she knew Madame de Friberg and her husband would take care of her children; and having seen them already dance several dances, even her maternal pride was sufficiently satisfied.

But Waldemar would not as yet allow her to leave the room; and being weary of standing, she left the arm of the countess, and went to a retired seat near a sort of door of entrance, which was thrown open, and by that means refreshed the rooms considerably. Ethelind sat for a few minutes on this seat lost in reverie, and inattentive to the passing objects; but suddenly turning to look through this entrance-door along the passage to which it led—a passage only faintly illuminated — she started from her seat in strong and overwhelming emotion; for she recognised in that passage the very spot where Geraldi, so many years ago, had stabbed his innocent victim; and found that, though she had been deceived by a new entrance, and the changes which had taken place in the furniture and other things, she was actually in those very rooms where the horrible event which had darkened over her destiny had actually happened. Nay, as that passage-entrance appeared neither to have been painted nor cleaned, since the last time she entered it, she even fancied she saw some of the murdered Mina's blood still staining the wall and the floor; and when Waldemar returned to her, he found her nearly fainting, and in the greatest emotion.

"Take me hence, take me hence!" she cried, "this place is not good for me — let me go away directly!" And then, as well as she could, she explained to him the cause of her distress, and the extent of her horrible suspicions. Waldemar immediately saw that to combat such feelings was impossible; he resolved, therefore, to remove her instantly from the place which called them forth; and having assured her he would call up the carriage directly, he told her, that when he had seen her home he would return for the children.

Accordingly, he left her, and ran down the dreaded passage, which was nearer the spot where his carriage was then stationed, than the new portico; while Ethelind, as she followed him with her eyes till his blue domino was lost in the crowd, said to herself, "To be sure he will not wish me to go along that passage to the coach, and pass that spot!"

But to return to Geraldi Duval, the author of those sufferings which were now so forcibly and so unexpectedly recalled to the mind of Ethelind, and who at that very moment was, though supposed dead, alive in Brussels.

Ethelind showed her knowledge of the human heart, in her conviction that the punishment of Geraldi was not likely to eradicate his hatred towards her, but rather to increase it; and in the enforced solitude of his prison, he was for ever dwelling on his blighted prospects, and pining for revenge on her as the cause.

Geraldi was, with reason, vain of his personal advantages; he possessed uncommon symmetry and beauty of form and feature; he had also conscious energy of character, sufficient to execute any project of his proud ambition; and he had been taught by his partial parents to believe that, could he acquire wealth and connexions by forming an advantageous marriage, the obscurity of his birth would be forgotten, and his towering wishes gratified.

It was therefore not only boyish passion, but worldly prudence, which led him to endeavour to recommend himself to Ethelind Manstein; and her disdain of him, which he attributed wholly to pride, and to scorn of his humble birth, stung him to the quick, as it convinced him that his parents were deceived in thinking he could ever get above the disadvantages of his parentage, and that the failure of all the aspirings of his ambition was to be predicted from this unfortunate instance. Therefore, it was not the mere circumstance of Ethelind's refusal to dance with him, but what that circumstance *proved*, which maddened the unhappy youth into the desire of personal and immediate vengeance; and when he saw Ethelind daring, by dancing with another, though she had refused him, to pass a personal affront on him, and one which he was sure she would not have ventured to pass on another — when,

too she had accepted a man of rank as a partner, as if to mark that she refused Geraldi on account of his being lowly born, his feelings became uncontrollable, and he rushed from the room to prepare the meditated vengeance. But that vengeance failed. And what increased the agony of his disappointment was, that Mina's life and the reason of her mother were the unintended sacrifices of his revenge; for they had both treated him always with kind and encouraging attention, and his beloved mother had more than once received services from Madame Steinheim.

Still, time might not perhaps have increased his enmity to Ethelind if it did not subdue it, had he not met in the prison with a companion who used every art to inflame his resentment, and keep up his terrible resolution of pursuing his revenge as soon as ever the term of his imprisonment was over; and his companion was no other than the worthless and unnatural son of poor Madame Steinheim.

This man, after a series of profligacy and extravagance, had been thrown into prison for debt;—and strange to say, instead of avoiding, he sought the presence of the murderer of his sister and the destroyer of his mother; and he spoke some degree of comfort to the heart of Geraldi, by assuring him that he forgave *him* his unintentional crime while trying to obtain a just revenge, but that he never would forgive ETHELIND, for being the cause of his sister's danger and death.

Geraldi, who had witnessed, almost with disgust, the regard which Steinheim expressed for him, the man who had destroyed his mother, (as he knew that he himself could never have borne the sight of the being who had murdered his,) was reconciled to this unnatural forgiveness, by Steinheim's professions of eternal hatred towards Ethelind, as the *real* and *original cause* of the destruction of those whom he loved; and thus, by administering food to his hate, Steinheim succeeded in lulling asleep the good feelings which would have closed his heart against this designing villain.

Geraldi did not suspect why Steinheim felt and acted thus. In the first place, Steinheim was a being in whom selfishness and vice had utterly annihilated the feelings of nature. As Mina would have shared with him his paternal fortune, he rejoiced at her death, after the first shock was over; and when the benevolent Mansteins offered to take charge of his unconscious mother, and he took possession of her fortune, he thought Geraldi the greatest benefactor he had ever known; and he would have told him so when he saw him, had he not discovered that the youth had affections and feelings with which he had no sympathy, and which indeed he did not expect to find in the RUFFIAN BOY. But he also hated Ethelind, and hated her parents; simply because he had injured them, and they had too greatly obliged him.

Manstein not only maintained his mother, (though he pretended he would allow him money for her board,) but he had lent him a considerable sum of money, for which, on hearing of his distresses, he had cancelled the bond. But Ethelind, aware of the vileness of his character, on his application to her, after her father's death, to lend him money, had positively refused to befriend him in any way, and by that means made him her deadly enemy as well as Geraldi, whom he, therefore, had a pleasure in spiriting up to perseverance, in what he called his *meritorious intentions*.

He had also other designs on Geraldi, in which he succeeded; for that forlorn boy, looking on himself as necessarily an outcast from society, was induced by Steinheim to join with him a company of banditti, some of whom were then imprisoned with them, but were going to be discharged soon, whose greatest haunt was a cavern in the Hercynian forest, near which, unconsciously, Waldemar took up his abode on leaving Ratisbon; near which place also there was a cavern, in which Geraldi and Steinheim lay concealed when Geraldi first attacked Ethelind's life after he left prison. It was, therefore, no wonder that Geraldi, who was allowed the choice of a horse in his comrades' stables in the forest, should have a steed so swift of foot, nor that he should so long and so often elude pursuit. But even his steed did not always save him; and in a rencontre on the road, (in which Steinheim was killed,) Geraldi, Giuseppe Celarno, his cousin, and some of the band, were taken and confined at Altenburg. But having escaped from thence, Geraldi (after his unsuccessful aim at Ethelind with a pistol) had fled with Giuseppe in disguise to England; and there, (as has been related above,) a man being murdered by the cousin of Geraldi, both of them, for this offence, were thrown into prison.

But Geraldi, being aware that nothing could be proved against *him*, and that he probably would be set at liberty again, thought it expedient to prevail on Giuseppe to change names with him; and they agreed that Giuseppe should be arraigned under the name of *Geraldi Duval*, and *he* under that of *Giuseppe Celarno*. Hence arose the security of Meynell; a security increased by the resemblance before mentioned of Giuseppe to his relation. Geraldi congratulated himself on the deception which he and his cousin had practised, because, when he was liberated from prison, he knew that the idea of his being no more, would make his return to Germany less insecure than it would otherwise have been, and would also throw Waldemar and Ethelind so completely off their guard, that he might very likely be able to complete his still meditated vengeance.

He accordingly, though still disguised, embarked at Harwich, and landed at Ostend. While he was there, he saw by a Brussels paper that Baron Waldemar had lately succeeded to a large property in the immediate neighbour-

hood of Brussels, and had recently taken possession of it.

To Brussels therefore Geraldi hastened; and he arrived early on the evening appointed for the ball to be given by the Count de Friberg; at *those very rooms* where, *twenty-one years before*, that event had taken place which was the means of making him a ruffian, and an outcast of society for life!

Geraldi overheard particulars of the intended ball, and where it was to be held, in a coffee-house, which he fearlessly entered, because the same paper which contained the account of Waldemar's change of abode, had also contained a long account of his trial and supposed execution; and he had the additional security of a reddish-coloured wig and false whiskers, and eye-brows of the same hue.

Having heard these, to him important particulars, (for the family of Waldemar was one of those named amongst the company expected to be at the ball,) Geraldi left the coffee-house to ruminate alone on the best means of effecting his still fixed design on the life of Ethelind; while he thought with savage joy, how infinitely and beyond all his hopes complete would now be his triumph, if he could destroy Ethelind on *that very spot* where she had given him the offence which he resented, and where an innocent girl whom he esteemed, had paid the forfeit of her offending.

"I shall then," said he, "revenge not only my injury, but that of Mina Steinheim!" And so eager was he to enjoy this complete satisfaction to his hatred, that he felt even life indifferent to him, when compared with the interests of this great revenge.

When his plans were nearly arranged, he went to the cathedral, in order to visit the grave of his parents, a pious duty which he paid as soon as he was liberated from prison, seven years before, and which no consideration could have led him to omit paying again on his return to Brussels. Accordingly, he bought flowers to strew over that grave, which was unnoticed and unknown by any other eye. And this being, who was meditating the forbidden crime of murder, with scrupulous punctuality was preparing to fulfil the commandment of "Honour thy father and thy mother;" not, however, with the wish of obeying the awful voice that had commanded it, but merely from a feeling of filial tenderness, of which even his habits of life, and his atrocious guilt in prospect, could not divest him.

On entering the church, he was arrested on his way to his parents' grave, by the sight of a new monument; and he started with mixed emotion, at seeing by the light of the lamp over it, that it was erected to the memory of his *two victims*, victims deeply regretted by him; and, actuated by the same feelings as he had experienced before, with the *same hand* intended to take the life of her who had watched with exemplary tenderness over that existence which he had rendered joyless, he strewed some of the flowers designed for his parents over the tomb of the Steinheims, and then threw himself, in a sort of hallowed paroxysm of filial affection, on the grave of his father and mother.

Strange, but not uncommon inconsistency of feelings! And the great master of human nature has represented Lady Macbeth as only deterred from murdering her sleeping and defenceless king, by his resemblance to her *own father*.

> "Had he not resembled my *father* as he slept,
> I'd have done it."

Is it then visionary to believe, that at the very moment when human beings are on the point of committing the worst actions, they are the most capable of being worked upon by virtuous motives, if presented to their mind?—Is it not likely, that while Geraldi's heart was thus softened by filial tenderness, and almost virtuous remorse, the voice of admonition and persuasion would not have been lost on him; and that, had any one, aware of his bloody intentions, been at hand to address his best feelings, the ruffian deed might have been prevented, and Ethelind saved? Had any one bidden him look forward once more with hope, and said to him, "You are supposed dead, and may, in a foreign land and under another name, begin life and fame anew," he might, perhaps, have been excited to forego his desperate and terrible intentions.

But no voice spoke to him from the senseless marble, nor did the prophetic priest address him from the altar, to "call the sinner to repentance;" but he rose from his parents' grave, sighed as he passed the tomb of two of his victims, and then repaired to the spot, whence he was resolved to watch for the moment to spring upon *another* victim.

As soon as the carriages began to arrive at the illuminated portico, which I have before described, Geraldi concealed himself behind the crowd assembled to see the company alight, and watched for the arrival of the family of Waldemar.

Waldemar alighted first, and Geraldi took particular notice of the decoration of his hat, and the colour of his domino. His mask, which he held in his hand, was, he observed, only a common black mask; and having waited till he saw Ethelind alight, and had thus ascertained the fact of her being there, he was preparing to depart, when he saw Waldemar drop something as he tied on his mask, before he followed Ethelind and his children. Geraldi took up what he dropped, and found it to be of the greatest importance to his purpose; for it was the ticket of admission for masks, and no name was written on the back of it.

"Every circumstance favours my designs," thought Geraldi, and he immediately went to a place where he knew masquerade dresses

were to be procured. On the counter lay the fellow-domino to Waldemar's, and a hat, which under his direction in a short time was the very counterpart of his; and on his pretending dissatisfaction with the domino and the hat, the shopman said, he could only assure him that the Baron de Waldemar had been there, and had chosen a hat and domino exactly the same in every particular.

This was enough;—and desiring a porter might follow with them to his hotel, he led the way thither, and assumed the fatal disguise; but he concealed the domino with a large Italian ferriola; and unmasked repaired to the scene of action, to watch for the best opportunity of masking and using the ticket.

Tickets were, he found, received at the door of the *well-remembered passage*, as well as at the portico; and Geraldi thought it would be best for him to show his at the *former* place, as it was ill lighted. He then entered the ball-room, in order to try how far he might venture to mingle in the crowd without fear of being found out as an intruder; and having done so, he saw that, if he took care to avoid being in the same room with Waldemar, he was in no danger of detection. He had been addressed several times as Waldemar, and had heard,—"Ay, you will not speak; but we know you, baron," so often, that he found he indeed looked the man whom he wished to appear; but seeing the real Waldemar enter the room, he retired at the door by which he had entered.

It was not long after this that Waldemar, at the desire of Ethelind, went in search of her carriage; and Geraldi, who had taken off his mask again, and had hidden his domino with his cloak, (which he had given to a by-stander to hold for him,) saw Ethelind pale and trembling standing at the foot of the passage; and was convinced, by the look of horror which her countenance assumed whenever her eye involuntarily glanced towards the spot where Mina fell, that the whole scene had recurred to her as strongly as if it had then happened. He was not surprised, therefore, to hear Waldemar calling for his servants, and telling them, as their lady was taken ill, that they should go away instantly. "But," he added, "the carriage must go round and get as near the portico as possible, as your lady can't come up this passage; therefore I will go with you, and see how far we shall have to walk."

These directions, and this care to save the feelings of Ethelind, were, alas! the means of placing her in the way of destruction.

"Now is my time," thought the listening assassin. Then throwing off his cloak and resuming his mask, while the by-standers supposed the gentleman was playing some masquerade trick, he grasped his dagger, and prepared for the work of death.

Ethelind, meanwhile, was anxiously expecting the return of Waldemar, and watching for the blue domino. Geraldi, therefore, had little difficulty in effecting his purpose; for, taking him for Waldemar, she advanced a few steps to meet him, and eagerly put her hand in his, which trembled with emotion. But finding that he led her along the dreaded passage, she cried, "Oh! not that way! Force me not to go that way! It would make the horrid scene live over again before me!"

Still, however, he dragged her along, to the wonder and alarm of Ethelind, whose slightest wish had usually power over her husband; and spite of her struggles he had now dragged her to the spot, stained, as she believed, with Mina's blood, when a well-known voice exclaimed,—"Yes! the scene shall *indeed* live over again before thee!" and in an instant she felt the assassin's dagger in her side! And when Waldemar, who was seeking her, drew near with Madame de Friberg, he received her bleeding and insensible in his arms.

Geraldi immediately tried to escape, and would have done so—for he was armed and desperate—had not his mask dropt off, which caused him to be recognised and seized by the officers of justice, who having found out that Guiseppe had been executed under the name of Geraldi, and that the latter had returned to Brussels, had been all day in pursuit of him, had traced him to the rooms, and were on the watch to seize him.

To resist them was, he soon found, impossible; and he was once more (for the *same crime* committed on the *same spot*, twenty-one years before) confined in the *same prison*.

But Waldemar was wholly unconscious of the projected escape, or fortunate detention, of the murderer; he saw nothing, he was conscious of nothing—but the murdered object whom he held in his arms; on whom he vainly lavished every tender and endearing epithet, and vainly conjured to speak to him once more, and look on him once more.

Assistance was sent for and procured immediately, while Ethelind was carried and laid on the same bed on which the bleeding body of Mina had reposed; and for hours Ethelind seemed as certainly dead as Mina herself.

But at length one of the medical attendants observed that there was a little movement of the pulse, and that it was to be hoped the appearance of death was occasioned not by the loss of blood, or by the wound, but was a deep swoon, the consequence of excess of terror.

The instant Waldemar heard this opinion, he started up from his station at the pillow of Ethelind, and seizing the physician's hand, exclaimed, "Save her! save her! and command my life and fortune!" while a sort of delirious joy succeeded his before frenzied despair.

The pulse of Ethelind now grew stronger and stronger; but as the blood still flowed faster and faster from the wound, every possible effort was made to stop the bleeding; and when these efforts were successful, it was judged expedient to remove the sufferer from

the place where she was; as she would, on recovering her senses, recollect only too well, that on that very bed she had herself knelt beside the bleeding corpse of her friend.

A litter, therefore, was procured, and Ethelind removed to the house of the Count de Friberg, which was at no great distance; and by the time she was conveyed into a chamber, she opened her eyes and gazed on the objects around her. But, alas! it was without any consciousness whatever; and the rapid pulse, flushed cheek, and glittering eye, proclaimed that she was now exposed to all the ravages and danger of fever.

Incessant were her ravings, most afflicting were the expressions in which she vented them, and agonizing were the images constantly present to her mind. She knew no one, and she saw no image but that of Geraldi; whom she was constantly invoking to take her life, and spare that of her adored husband; and while that husband was holding her burning hand in his, and absorbed in watching her ever-varying cheek, she used, in the most pathetic accents, to deplore his cruel absence, and lament his unkindness in leaving her exposed to the fury of Geraldi.

She would then conjure Waldemar himself to go in search of Waldemar, and bring him to her; unconscious that his bitter tears fell upon her supplicating hands, and that she was speaking daggers to the heart of her husband, nearly as terrible as the dagger of Geraldi.

But at length, with the fever, the delirium subsided; and Ethelind recognised the anxious husband, who had so fondly watched, and so fervently prayed, beside her frenzied pillow during so many sleepless nights. But the recognition was too calm, and she seemed not sufficiently alive to the overwhelming emotions of thankfulness and joy, which oppressed Waldemar and choked his utterance.

All danger for her life was, however, at an end, and the only fear remaining was for her *reason*.

One idea was predominant, and that was, that Geraldi was not really taken, though she was told that he was certainly in prison.

"Did I ever deceive you, dearest?" said Waldemar.

"No; but you have been deceived, and may be so again."

"Well then—if I go to the prison and see Geraldi in irons, will you believe it?"

"I will."

And Waldemar went to the prison, agonizing as the visit was to him.

Waldemar was far more agitated than Geraldi, when through a grated window he beheld the still striking form and countenance of the unrelenting ruffian.

Geraldi knew him instantly, dark as was his dungeon; and springing up with a violence that made the clanging of his fetters sound to the inmost soul of Waldemar, he demanded "what the intrusion meant; and if the Baron de Waldemar came to triumph over his foe in chains?"

"No," replied Waldemar, "I did not come to insult you, but to oblige my injured wife."

"Your wife!—is she not dead then?" demanded Geraldi.

"No—and she is even out of danger."

I will not endeavour to describe the horrible regrets of Geraldi, mingled occasionally with the bitter lamentations for the deaths of Madame Steinheim and the innocent Mina; and an avowal of the melancholy pleasure with which he had strewed their tomb with flowers.

Waldemar, while Geraldi paused to take breath, could not help observing, "that Ethelind was as innocent a victim as Mina and her mother."

"Innocent!—innocent! When she *scorned me*—when her pride made her refuse her hand in the dance to the son of Theresa Duval; and when she even danced with another the moment after! The poor kind Steinheims never scorned Geraldi—and I *killed them*;—and she, the proud one, lives! O my accursed fate! and she lives to triumph in it!"

"No—she lives to *deplore* it; for she has never felt resentment towards you, Geraldi; and before I leave you, it is my duty perhaps, in pity to your sufferings, to assure you that Ethelind forgives and prays for you."

"Forgives *me!*—*she* forgives *me!*—What has she to forgive? She has had years of happiness; she has had a life of freedom, of friendship, of gratified affections, of unstained reputation, and probably of high respect and honour. And what has *my* life been?—and all the consequence of her devilish pride, which blighted the commencement of it! I loved her, Baron de Waldemar, baby as I was; I loved her, and she knew it; and yet she humbled me, and yet she wounded me to the very soul! True, passion was, from the busy suggestions of pride, instantly swallowed up in hatred—but at the moment of her scorn I was an object of pity; and she—she made me, from the consequences of that evening, an object of abhorrence and an outcast of society!—Forgive *me!* She forgive *me!* No; she should implore *my* forgiveness, for having blasted all the fair promise of my youth, and for having shut the present and the future world equally against me!"

Here Geraldi paused in strong and affecting emotion. And Waldemar—however unnatural such bitter resentment of so trifling a circumstance appeared to him, and however morbid the mind of the man—forgot all other feelings in pity for his blasted prospects; and with solemn earnestness he conjured him to tell him if there was any way in which he could serve him, or oblige him; and if he would like to receive spiritual comfort from any particular person.

"Serve me!" said Geraldi, "why, ay. Free me from these fetters, prevail on my enemies

to drop *their* prosecution against me, and give up *your own;* will you do that? You see I put your sincerity to a strong test, and ask a great service of you."

"You do; and one I cannot perform, as your enlargement is, you know, incompatible with my wife's safety."

"It is so; and you *cannot* save me, and *ought* not to save me; therefore why do you pretend to offer me your services?"

"Aught *else* that I could do I *would* do."

"But there is only one effectual service, and that you *can't* do—Away with you!—As to spiritual aid, when I want it I'll send for it."

And Waldemar returned home.

"Well," said Ethelind, with a distrustful smile "you have not seen him; he is fled again, I know."

However, the assurances of Waldemar removed this impression, though nothing could convince her that he would not escape again; and she often earnestly begged Waldemar to let her retire into the safe walls of a convent. And so sure was she that Geraldi would be acquitted at the trial which was then going on, that Waldemar promised to attend the conclusion of it in person; and, if Geraldi was acquitted both of the robbery and murder, to return, and convey her immediately into a convent.

But Geraldi was convicted, and condemned to execution. Still, as two days were to elapse before the sentence was to take place, Ethelind, with that calm determination which was so alarming to behold, persisted in believing he would escape; and was every moment starting, and fancying he was on the stairs, or at the window; and Waldemar knew not how to combat this evidently diseased state of nervous feeling. However, she seemed pleased with the idea of his going again to the prison, and he went.

Geraldi's face was turned towards the grate when Waldemar reached it; but he was so absorbed in thought that he was unconscious of his approach; and his countenance was so full of woe, and so devoid of the fierceness which usually distinguished it, that Waldemar beheld him with eyes tearful with compassion.

At length Geraldi saw him, and approaching him said, "Baron Waldemar, why you thus persist to visit me I know not; but I am told you are a kind-hearted man, and I believe you do not come to insult the wretched."

"No, on my soul!" said Waldemar, speaking in strong and evident emotion.

Geraldi looked at him as if he would have read his inmost heart—"Is your wife dead, or dying?"

"No, she lives, and will live."

"Then is that tear for me!—I thank you. Had such a man so felt for me when I first erred, *perhaps* I should not have been the thing I am."

"I firmly believe it."

"Again I thank you," said Geraldi. "Baron Waldemar," he continued, "I have seen a priest since you left me, and he has told me what has altered my feeling much towards Ethelind Manstein. I find that with all her pride she owned that Geraldi Duval had a *soul.* I find that, believing me dead, she ordered masses both at Prague and here, to be said for the soul of Geraldi Duval: she made me of importance in one way, however; and I thank her too.—Yes, and I believe I am glad I did not kill her;—and—yes—yes—I believe I forgive her. And now," he added, as if willing to escape from any witness of his deep emotion, "leave me, leave me."

"Would I could save you!" exclaimed Waldemar, with that tone and in that accent of sincerity which carries conviction to the heart of the bearer.

"*You cannot;* but I am told that my REDEEMER CAN, and I *endeavour to believe it.* Farewell!"

"You shall have the prayers of us all," said Waldemar; and hastened away.

The next morning Geraldi expiated his crimes on the scaffold, where his demeanour, though manly, was not hardened; and the account of his last moments was such as to gratify the feeling heart of Waldemar.

But no one could persuade Ethelind that he was really dead; she was sure that he even contrived to deceive the executioner, and that he feigned death; and Waldemar feared that her reason would never perfectly return. But as desperate cases require desperate cures, he waited on the magistrate, and obtained leave to bring Ethelind to see the body of Geraldi before it was clad in the habiliments of the grave. And that afternoon, without telling Ethelind whither he was carrying her, he led her to the room that contained the remains of her now powerless enemy. "Look there, incredulous Ethelind!" said Waldemar; "look on that well-known face, and tell me if you do not indeed see Geraldi!"

Ethelind started with instinctive terror at the sight of those features; and said in a hurried voice, "But he is only sleeping! Let us away; he will kill me, you know, when he wakes again!"

Waldemar's heart now died within him, and he feared even the sight would not restore her to sane perception. But he persisted.—"Look again, dearest Ethelind! nay, move not so softly; nothing but the last dread trumpet can awake him now."

Ethelind shuddered, and said in a low voice, "The last dread trumpet! O, then, poor Geraldi!" She now approached still nearer; and as she saw that cheek, once, and always indeed, so round, and so blooming, now sunk, and pale, and livid; and when she beheld those "*bright* and *terrible* eyes" fast closed in the unyielding film of death—the once full, red, and scornful lip, now wan, thin, and shut up

with the perceptible tightness of dissolution, her bosom began to heave, and a rising sob indicated beginning conviction.

Waldemar's hopes instantly revived, and he exclaimed, "Now, Ethelind, touch that hand, so often armed against thy innocent life, though powerless now, and able to hurt thee no more."

Waldemar then took the hand of Ethelind, and made it grasp the hand of Geraldi. As soon as she felt that icy coldness, that coldness so peculiar, so penetrating; that coldness which nothing living knows, and which death alone can give, the awful touch carried conviction to her diseased mind; tears, long strangers to her, burst in salutary torrents from her eyes; and throwing herself in her husband's arms, she exclaimed, "O Waldemar! I am now convinced, and you have cured me; but take me hence, for now this sight is too much for me."

From that hour Ethelind was restored to health of mind as well as of body; and nothing has since disturbed her happiness or that of her family, though a sudden gloom always overspreads the countenance both of Waldemar and Ethelind whenever the idea of Geraldi is recalled to them; but that gloom is occasioned by generous feeling for his fate, not by resentment of his crime. And Ethelind, while contemplating the bright prospects of her own sons, regrets that she was the means of blighting the fair promise of the youthful Geraldi.

[This story is founded on a fact which was related to me as follows:—About twenty years ago, a boy at Brussels, having been rejected as a partner at a ball, by a girl about his own age which was not much more than twelve, he left the ball-room, went to a coffee house, and drank several glasses of wine; then lay in wait for the poor girl, as she left the place of entertainment, and, as he thought, stabbed her to the heart; but in his flutter he had mistaken the object, and he had stabbed her companion. He was instantly seized, and as he was led to prison, he approached his intended victim, and said, "*Je te retrouverai un jour!*" On account of his extreme youth his sentence was not death, but imprisonment for twenty years. The term of his imprisonment is now about to expire.]

THE WELCOME HOME;

OR,

THE BALL.

"How fortunate is it for me, with my impatient spirit," said Ronald Breadalbane to General Monthermer, as they were travelling from Portsmouth to London, "that I have you with me as a companion to beguile the length of the way!"

"I can echo your words with perfect sincerity," replied the General; "and after a residence in India of sixteen years and upwards, my eagerness to reach London, and get my business transacted there, that I may hasten to my native place, is as great as yours."

"Ay!" replied the enthusiastic and national Breadalbane, who was many years younger than the General; "but my native place, my Highland home, is such an enchanting spot! O Scotland, dear Scotland! land of the mountain and the vale! land of beautiful women and of brave men! land of genius and of song! land of kindness and of hospitality! I bring to thee an unchanged heart, my country, and a conviction that there is nought like thee upon the habitable globe!"

Had Breadalbane been so fortunate as to have read the eulogium lately passed by a certain orator on this beloved land of his birth, in his admirable speech on the education of the poor, he would, perhaps, have borrowed his language; and would have exclaimed, "What part of the world into which Scotchmen have emigrated, have they not benefited? What part where they have emigrated, have they not conferred more benefits upon than they have reaped?"

General Monthermer, who loved his own country too well not to be able to make allowances for national pride in others, replied with a benevolent smile, "I fully admit the truth of what you have said of Scotland; for I have gazed enamoured on its women, listened with delight to the eloquence of its orators, have hung enraptured on its melodies, and read with ever-new transport the works of its poets and its writers. I have also had my inmost soul warmed by its hospitality; and who that has ever seen and been welcomed to the metropolis of your country, Breadalbane, but must remember it with grateful pleasure to the end of his existence, and almost pine to behold Edinburgh again."

"Thank you, thank you, dear General," cried the warm-hearted Caledonian, grasping his hand eagerly; "then let me one day welcome you there."

"But tell me," said the General, laughing, "can you not in return say something in praise of poor Old England?"

"Oh! much, much: but you are yourself such an eulogy on your country, that I need say nothing except that amongst the other obligations which she has conferred on the world, I rank very highly indeed that of her having produced a General Monthermer."

"You make me blush, Breadalbane," replied Monthermer, "and I know not how to show my sense of such courtesy."

"I will tell you how; come and visit me in my own dear little Highland home, and let me show you to my family and my friends. Oh! it is such a scene! I cannot think of it without tears of rapture. The rocks, the glens,

the lake, Oh! — do not think me a romantic idiot when I own, that I pity every one who is not born in a mountainous country. It is so impossible, I think, for a man to be as much attached to a flat, unpicturesque home, as to one like mine. I doubt whether one's affection for one's relations is not stronger, when one associates their image with that of fine country, and — and — Ah! I see you laugh, General, and I dare say you think you are as impatient to see your parents and relations in the flat part of England in which they live, as I am to revisit mine and the girl of my heart, residing amidst all the prodigality of nature."

"I am sure of it," replied the General, with a sigh. "Parents, alas! I have not now to welcome me," he added, passing the back of his hand across his eyes; "they are dead."

"But I hope they lived long enough to hear of your successes abroad, and of your large acquisition of fortune!"

"They did; and to profit by the latter. Ours is a decayed family; but now it will, I trust, be reinstated in its former splendour; and I have the satisfaction of knowing, that before they died, my beloved parents were restored, through my means, to some of the habitual state of their ancestors."

"Happy, happy Monthermer!"

"Yes, happy so far I am; and believe me, I feel my happiness as deeply, and that it is as great, as if I had been born on a Highland mountain, and my parents had lived on its side. No, no; believe me, the affections are wholly independent of scenery. Were you, on your return home, to find your parents dead, your mistress false, and your friends exiled—do you think that the scenery would give you pleasure?"

"No; at least not so much."

"Yet you must feel that it would, in order to prove that it at all heightens the present glow of the affections; and I maintain, that if I find those friends yet left to me—well, faithful, and affectionate—I shall be quite as happy on my barren, treeless abode, the ungraceful town of my nativity, with its bleak surrounding marshes and its flat shores, as you amidst your picturesque mountains and lofty rocks."

"I am not convinced," replied Breadalbane, "and I still bless Heaven for having made me a denizen of the mountains."

"I bless it," returned Monthermer, "for having given me affections, and preserved me to some objects, I trust, to engage and gratify them, whether it be in the land of the mountain or the plain."

At length the travellers reached London; and after having finished their business, Breadalbane set off for Scotland, and the General for his nearer and less beautiful home; but they did not part till they had promised to keep up, by letters, that acquaintance which had begun in India, and which a long voyage together in the same ship had matured into intimacy.

A two days' journey brought General Monthermer in sight of his native place; whose spires he saw many miles before him, rising darkly on the glowing back-ground made by the setting sun.

"That is one advantage I have over Breadalbane," said the General to himself, while his lip quivered with strong and affectionate emotion. "As my native place is on a dead flat, I can see it so much sooner than he can his. Mistaken young man! to be sure he has more and nearer relations to welcome him than I have; but can his heart beat more strongly at the thought of a reunion with them than mine does at this moment?"

At length the General called to the postilions to stop, and draw up to a little gate, by a gentle acclivity, within one mile of the place of his destination; there he alighted, and desired the drivers to wait till he returned.

This gate led to the church-yard in which the remains of General Monthermer's parents were deposited; and where, till his return, he had desired that a simple stone alone should mark out the spot where they were laid. To this spot he now directed his steps, and bent over the unconscious sod in a paroxysm of filial tenderness and grief. Still they were not altogether unpleasing tears. He felt pious thankfulness subdue the murmur of regret, when he recollected, that he had been permitted to cheer their declining years by bestowing on them a large portion of his affluence; and he also joyed to think, that it was allowed to them to hear and to glory in the military fame of their son.

"There is one more duty to perform towards them," said he to himself; "I will raise a monument to their memory;" and then, with a sigh of mingled feelings, he retraced his steps towards the gate.

On his way he had nearly trodden on a toad, which crawled across his path; and, with a feeling of impulsive, or rather, I hope, of principled humanity, he stooped down and removed the poor reptile off the path, that it might avoid a recurrence of the danger.

"Oh, now I'm sure 'tis he!" exclaimed a voice behind him. "It can be nobody but Mr. George Monthermer; that was so like you, sir. God bless your honour! and welcome back to Old England!"

Monthermer turned round, and saw a shabbily dressed woman, with a mob-cap flying open; and who, with a torn and coloured apron, was now wiping away the tears that seemed to welcome him as much as her words had done.

"I thank you my good woman," said he, stopping and surveying her earnestly; — "I thank you, but I do not recollect you, and I wonder you recollect me."

"Oh! how could I fail to know you, sir,

when I saw your kindness to that nasty thing! It was so like what I have seen you do before! But no wonder you don't recollect me; times are changed with me, and with many others, you know, since your honour went away.—Have you quite forgotten Lucy Simmons?"

"Lucy! my good woman, is it you?" cried the General, kindly; "you, whom I left so well settled! I wonder no one wrote me word that things did not go right with you. But come sit down on this grave-stone, and tell me what changes I am to expect. You, you know, will not want a friend now I am come."

Poor Lucy's heart was now too full for utterance immediately; but when she recovered, she answered, and sometimes anticipated Monthermer's questions.

"Ay, your honour," said she, "it would have gone very hard with me when my husband died and left me without a penny, and six children to maintain, but for Miss Marian Trelawney."

"How!" exclaimed the General, starting; "why, I thought Mr. Trelawney spent all his personal property, and died in debt; and that his daughters, as the estates went to the male heir, have little or nothing to live upon."

"Yes, that is only too true, sir; but then, if Miss Marian had only a guinea in the world, you know, sir, she would give part of it to those who wanted it. Besides, sir, they are not so badly off neither; and Miss Marian would do very well if it was not for her sister, I fancy, who was, you know, sir, a beauty, and so her father and mother spoiled her; and so, sir, she must have her whims and her nice things still, sir; and I believe, for that reason, she may spoil her sister, as I call it. Miss Marian keeps a day-school."

"Keeps a school!" cried the General.—"Marian Trelawney keep a school!"

"Yes, sir; she keeps a school in the day for gentlefolks, and for money, and twice a week in the evening she teaches poor folks' children for love, and mine amongst the rest; and that is a great help to me, sir, besides having her washing and her sister's, and a few broth now and then, and such like. But dear heart, how glad she and Miss Trelawney will be to see you!"

"Where do they live?"

Lucy told him, and he started again at the humility of their abode.

"We have been expecting you, you know, sir," she continued; "and the house is ready."

"But I was not expected so soon," he replied.

"No, not for some days. Well, dear me! how different your honour will find things! There's the Aislabies that used to hold their heads so high, all ruined and gone! and there's the Bensons living in a hole of a house!"

"Indeed!" cried the general in an absent manner. "But tell me, are my brother and sister and their children at home?"

"No, sir; they went out of town a week ago to their country-house."

At this moment a shout was heard from the town.

"What noise is that?" cried the General; "it seemed like a shout!"

"Dear me, yes, and so it was! that ever I should forget to tell your honour! They are shouting for you!"

"For me!"

"Yes; one of the old members is dead, and they have put you up for a parliament-man;—and everybody is so glad!—so you are sure to get it!"

"Me!" faltered out the General, choked with no unpleasant feeling at this proof of his fellow-citizens' regard;—"and did my brother know of it?"

"No, sir; but I hear he is sent for; and I believe he is expected to-morrow."

"That is well," he replied. "But come, I must go, the air grows chill."

"Oh dear! yes, do go," cried Lucy. "How glad the folks will be to see you drive in! I am sure they will know you directly; and then they will drag your honour into the town."

"They shall do no such thing," cried the General. "And mark me, Lucy, as you value my favour, keep my arrival secret till to-morrow."

Lucy said it would be very hard to do it, as so many would rejoice to know his honour was come; but if she must, she must.

Monthermer then slipped some money into her hand; and desiring the postilions to drive slowly to the principal inn, and to be sure not to name him to anybody, he wished Lucy a good night, and with his handkerchief at his face he hurried towards the town.

"And so I am to represent my native town!" thought he. "Would that my parents had lived to see this day! how pleased they would have been!"

He then hastened still more rapidly on, to escape from the poignancy of that regret.

"And so my brother and his family are not at home! Well, then, I may go first to call on the Trelawneys." And in a few moments more he found the knocker of their door in his hand.

Instead of the powdered footman that used to answer a knock at the door, it was now answered by a servant girl, who told him both the ladies were at home; and if he would walk into the parlour, she would let them know.—"But who shall I say is here, sir?"

"An old friend," replied Monthermer, in a hoarse voice. But hoarse as it was, it was recognised by Marian Trelawney.

"Oh! it is he! it is George Monthermer!" she exclaimed; and regardless of her dress and her occupation, (for she was making pastry for the morrow,) she ran from the kitchen into the parlour. But when she saw Monthermer she could not utter one word of welcome,

and she received his affectionate salute in silence and in trembling. The servant now brought candles in; and Marian found voice enough to desire the servant to tell her sister General Monthermer was there.

Miss Trelawney knew it already; but she could not think of making her appearance till she had done something to her dress, and repaired the faded roses on her cheek; and having done so, she sailed into the room with her usual dignity, as a Trelawney and a beauty.

Meanwhile, neither the General nor Marian had said much; for both were thinking of the altered fortunes of the latter, and of relatives and friends, dead, ruined, and dispersed, since the hour when they last met; while Marian at length uttered, "You find us much altered in situation!"

"Psha!" cried the General, in reply, closely grasping her hand as he spoke; then dropping it again, he added, "Don't talk of that—don't talk of that; you are unchanged! you really look as young as when we parted, Marian. Countenance never grows old—mere features do."

"You are changed in manners, though not in person much," replied Marian, smiling through her tears; "for you are grown a flatterer, General."

"General!—call me Monthermer, if you please." And it was at this moment that Miss Trelawney entered.

The General certainly did not receive her as he did her sister. His salute was colder, and his manner more distant; and her welcome to him was one of many words.

"Dear me!" cried Marian smiling, "my sister looks so smart and so neat, I must apologize for my appearance; but really, when I heard your voice, my dear friend, I forgot I had an apron on, and that my hands were covered with flour—and only see how I have floured the sleeves of your coat!"

Monthermer looked as if he had a mind to kiss the soft small hand which now pointed to the mischief it had done. But he did not; he contented himself with kissing the flour on his sleeve, and then with a sigh he brushed it off.

"And so you are grown quite notable, are you?" cried he; while Marian busied herself in untying her apron. "And you pretend to make pies and puddings, I suppose?"

"It is no pretence," said Marian cheerfully, "for I have no one to do it for me—besides, my kind sister fancies no one's pie-crust so good as mine; therefore vanity makes me notable."

Monthermer sighed, and almost frowned; for he recollected what Lucy had said, and fancied Marian was indeed spoiling her sister, and subservient to her whims. But he resolved to think of other things; and was putting question after question to them, and they were answering them, when they were suddenly interrupted by a sound of many voices and of many feet; and in a moment they heard a violent knock at the door, which was, however, nearly drowned in shouts of "Monthermer for ever!" The servant girl now opened the door; and, "Is not General Monthermer here?" was asked by more voices than one. And no sooner was the question answered, than in rushed two or three of the principal gentlemen of the town; while the narrow hall was filled with people.

The gentlemen exclaimed, "General Monthermer, welcome to England and to us!" The general accepted and pressed their tendered hands, but only bowed in return; while Marian turned away to hide her tears, and Miss Trelawney looked her offended dignity at the intrusion.

"General," added one of the gentlemen, "your postilions, finding it was the new candidate whom they had driven, could not help betraying the secret of your arrival, and you *must* come with us and show yourself to the people."

"No, no, impossible!—not to-night," replied the General, shrinking perhaps from the word *must*, being so lately come from a country where he ruled instead of obeying. But the gentlemen persisted with such friendly violence, that the General, being conscious also of an obligation to them, at length consented to accompany them, when, with the feeling of a true gentleman, he turned gracefully round to apologize to the ladies, for the liberty which zeal for him and his cause had occasioned his friends to take with them and their house. The gentlemen were forced to act on the hint he gave, and they made their excuses acceptable even to the haughty Miss Trelawney, whose "pride fell not with her fortune." Monthermer then told them he would see them the next day, and departed with his friends.

It was late, very late that night ere the shouts ceased of "Monthermer for ever!" But however they might disturb the sleep of her sister, Marian was glad to be so kept awake. No one was more gratified by being the discoverer of General Monthermer's having arrived that night than Lucy Simmons; as she was now at liberty to own she had seen him, and she had longed to tell all about the toad—and all the *says I's* and *says he's*—and the promised kindnesses—and the given money. And here let me add, that the bounty of the General was not slow to gladden her widowed abode, and that he caused "the widow's heart to sing for joy."

The next day General Monthermer was so engrossed with the interests of his election, that he could not call on the sisters till two o'clock, and then he found them at dinner. But Marian insisted on his coming in, though Miss Trelawney's dignity was a little offended by the intrusion.

"I had not an idea that you dined so early," said the conscious General.

"No," replied Miss Trelawney; "no one could suspect *us* of dining at so vulgar an hour; but as Marian chooses to keep school, we must keep schoolmistress's hours, you know."

While he was speaking, the General looked at the dinner, and saw that before her stood a nice roasted spring chicken and young potatoes, and a pint bottle of white wine; while Marian's fare was evidently a mutton-chop and a decanter of water.

"So!" thought the General, "I suspect that Marian chooses to keep school that you (her sister) may be indulged in dainties!"

Marian saw the General look at the chicken and the wine with a peculiar expression of countenance, and she answered his thoughts as it were by saying,

"My sister has delicate health, and a still more delicate appetite; and she can only eat chickens, and those kind of things; I, you know, was always robust, and could eat any thing."

"Is it forbidden me to partake of your mutton chop?" said he, sitting down to the table; "for I am to dine late."

Miss Trelawney smiled, and very graciously proffered him a share of her chicken and her wine. But the General accepted only the wine; and it was in order to have an excuse for tasting that, that he sat down.

"Do not *you* drink wine?" said he to Marian.

"No; very rarely. I do not want it; and it costs money, you know."

"This is not good wine, Miss Trelawney," cried he, tasting it; "and if you are an invalid, it is not what you ought to drink. I must insist on prescribing to you some excellent Madeira, of which I have a large cargo now in the harbour; and I will send you some of it as soon as it is unpacked; and then, perhaps, for the sake of an old friend, your sister may be prevailed on to drink some."

Miss Trelawney expressed her gratitude loudly and warmly. But Marian did not speak at first; and then she only said, "No; even a present from you will not tempt me to indulge in a luxury so expensive; for I make it a principle to have as few wants and indulgences as I can."

"Well," replied Monthermer warmly, "you may go without wine on *principle* and from *choice*, if you please; but I cannot bear that you should do it from *necessity*."

Marian looked at him with grateful emotion, then rose, and left the room a while; and Miss Trelawney took the opportunity of her absence to assure him that there was really no occasion for Marian to slave as she did, and deny herself so many things; but it was her will, and she would do it.

The general did not reply, though much tempted to do so; and he was very glad when Marian came back. When she was forced to go to her scholars, he took his leave.

At night he sent the promised wine; and though Miss Trelawney was pleased, Marian was hurt at the number of the dozens, and did not like to accept so magnificent a present from any one. "Still, if I must be obliged," she said to herself, "I had rather be so to *him* than to any one else."

That day had not only reunited the General to a brother whom he dearly loved, but had introduced him to his brother's wife and children, amongst whom was a tall girl of fifteen, who, Mrs. Monthermer assured him, was so well and notably brought up, that as young as she was, she was able to manage a family, and that she had found her the sweetest little nurse that ever she saw.

"So, so!" thought the General, "I see I have a house-keeper and a nurse already provided for me." And he was not slow to discover, that this lady, whose well-written and apparently well-felt letters to him in India had impressed him powerfully in her favour, was in reality a cold-hearted selfish woman, keeping a watchful eye over the nabob brother and uncle.

Mr. Monthermer was the direct opposite to his wife—generous, disinterested, affectionate; and instead of wishing his brother to continue single for the sake of his children, he earnestly hoped he would marry as soon as he arrived. While her husband uttered this folly (as she thought it) to herself alone, Mrs. Monthermer did not mind it; but as he at last thought proper to hold the same language to his brother, when the bustle of the election was over and General Monthermer was the returned member, she was quite astonished to see how little her husband considered his own and his children's interests.

"Well, George," said Mr. Monthermer to his brother, "now you are a general and a rich nabob, to be sure you will think of being a better thing still—and that is a *husband?*"

"If I can find a woman who will love me for myself alone, and can convince me that she does so — perhaps I may marry," replied the General.

"And pray why should you doubt it? You are a very handsome fellow yet, George, and not by any means old; — two years my junior, you know, and that I think young; four-and-forty is not old for a man;—but I do not know where to find any one worthy of you. I used to think before you went abroad that you had a secret liking for that admirable woman Marian Trelawney; and for aught I see, she is quite as good-looking as she was then, and single still."

"Yes," cried Mrs. Monthermer, "that she may easily be, and not good-looking either;—but then she is not quite so young as she was then. Dear me! how could you think the

General could ever think of such a plain person as that, and now too that she is old!"

"Old!—She is some years younger than George."

"If the General must have one of the sisters, to be sure he would prefer the elder, as she has been a beauty, and has fine remains still."

"What! prefer a wreck of charms?—prefer a faded beauty to a first-rate agreeable in fine preservation? No, no, Eliza; my brother is too wise for that; and you underrate poor Marian.—Marian Trelawney, brother, is—is she not?—one of those women in whom her own sex see nothing, and ours every thing;—that is, in point of attraction I mean. She may be what they call plain; yet I scarcely ever knew a man who did not, after conversing with her half an hour, from the play of her features and her charm of manner, fancy her almost handsome."

"They must have lively imaginations then," replied Mrs. Monthermer angrily; "and I dare say the General thinks as I do; but I always thought you bewitched to the person in question."

The General for some cause or other was disinclined to talk on this subject at all; but now he found himself called on to reply. "I remember *Miss* Trelawney," said he, "by far the most beautiful woman I ever saw. Still she had never that charm which her sister has; and which I do not presume to define," he added, "though I feel it powerfully."

"You need not trouble yourself to do it," said his brother smiling; "Homer has done it for you, when he describes the cestus of Venus, without which even the Goddess of Beauty was not paramount in attraction, and with which the haughty Juno became irresistible."

General Monthermer now tried to change the subject; but his brother persisted to recommend a wife to him, and named many young ladies who might suit him. But not one of them escaped Mrs. Monthermer's censure; one had madness in her family; another scrofula; and another had a secret attachment. In short, the General saw very clearly, and wondered his brother did not, that Mrs. Monthermer would never recommend a wife to *him*.

With what pleasure did he turn from an interested, detracting woman like this, to the simple-minded and benevolent Marian Trelawney! How did he prefer to Mrs. Monthermer's welcome, even that of the proud and repellent Miss Trelawney herself!

It is not to be supposed that General Monthermer could escape the matrimonial designs of the ladies in the town of———; nor that he should not receive many invitations and many civilities from the inhabitants both of that and the environs; and as his house was now newly painted and furnished, (the house in which his father resided,) he resolved to give a ball and supper.

Therefore, having previously consulted his brother, his cards of invitation were soon circulated, and filled with joyful expectation many a young and many an elderly woman.

He carried a card written by himself to the sisters; and presenting it to Miss Trelawney with much respect, he hoped she and her sister would do him the honour of gracing his ball with their presence.

Miss Trelawney bowed, but did not speak, and coloured highly as if from some unpleasant feelings. Marian did the same; and then in a low voice she told him, that under their present circumstances, they made it a point to decline all such invitations.

"What is it I hear?" cried the General; "and what can you mean?"

"That, fallen as we are in fortune, and I obliged to earn my own living, I do not feel that I should now be in my place at an assembly such as yours will be; and sure am I, that my appearance there would call forth many invidious remarks, to which you would be sorry to be the means of exposing us."

"And do you really think, and can I believe, that the Miss Trelawneys can ever be deemed intruders, and as out of their proper place, in any society?"

"I do; and my sister will tell you, that having once ventured to a public ball here, since I commenced my present mode of life, she heard her dress so severely criticised, and her coming to the ball under her circumstances so severely censured, that she and her chaperone were glad to retire early; and the latter advised her never to expose herself to such illiberality, as she called it, again."

The General listened in perplexed and angry silence and surprise. At length he started up, and exclaimed, "I solemnly swear that if you, my oldest and dearest friends, cannot and may not come to my ball, I will have no ball at all." Then, suddenly rushing from the house, he went home; and before night all those who had been invited received a card to say that the ball of General Monthermer was unavoidably postponed; and he came to announce this change of plan in person to the Trelawneys; but the cause of it he would not disclose, even to his brother, who wondered and interrogated in vain. "No," said he to himself; "no feast given by me shall make them feel yet more than they now do their altered state, nor shall that noble-minded woman for a moment regret that her active virtue has excluded her from a scene which otherwise she would have rejoiced to witness. And what is the sacrifice to me? Nothing; for how could I enjoy a pleasure purchased by one pang to Marian Trelawney?"

Marian and her sister both deeply felt this marked proof of regard shown them by Monthermer; and Marian eagerly tried to persuade

him to alter his determination — but in vain. He told them it was a sacrifice which friendship required of him, and make it he would.

The General spoke with vehemence; and having unconsciously, in his eagerness, crumpled up one piece of paper, the blank part of a letter which, with some others, was lying on the table, was about to crumple up another, when Marian, laughing, took it out of his hand, and begged he would do no more mischief.

"Mischief!" cried he, "what mischief have I done?"

"Not much; only you have been guilty of unnecessary waste; I can make something useful of these papers which you treat with so little ceremony." And in a short time after, by putting the direction at the bottom, and painting a little flower on the blank side, she soon cut and pinched the paper into a neat little box; and the other papers, by aid of her scissors, and the assistance of her painting brush, she soon made into tapers to light candles with.

"And pray," said the General, admiring her economical ingenuity, "what do you do with these things when they are done?"

"Oh," cried Miss Trelawney, "they serve as rewards to her children; and, trumpery as they are, I assure you they are valued by them. They know Marian can't afford to give better presents now, and they appreciate the good will, and are proud of the distinction; besides, in these little boxes, she teaches them to put litters — such as ends of thread, or tape; and as they know what they are made of, it also inculcates in them a habit of not wasting any thing, as even old cards will turn to account."

"Yes," interrupted Marian, smiling, "and General Monthermer's elegant invitation, otherwise so thrown away on me, may serve a useful purpose, by making the sides of a pincushion or a needle-book."

"So, then, you teach moral principles, do you," said the General, "by means of a bit of paper?"

"I try to do it; and in addition to my other efforts, I make all my pupils learn Miss Edgeworth's inimitable tale of 'Waste not, Want not!'"

[Had Teresa Tidy been published then, no doubt Marian Trelawney would have recommended that also to her pupils.]

The General listened to his amiable friend, and admired and revered her more than ever. Insensibly, too, he fell into a reverie; and remembered the hour when he, a poor lieutenant of dragoons, sighed hopelessly and in secret for Marian Trelawney, the co-heiress of the rich Mr. Trelawney. But though he had always lived with the sisters on the most intimate footing, Monthermer was not only withheld by a consciousness of poverty from disclosing his passion for Marian, but he, in common with many others, believed her attached to a gentleman, her equal in fortune; and at this moment of suspense and increased despair, Monthermer's regiment was ordered to India. But Marian had *not* married — and that gentleman married another woman. Since he returned, too, he had heard her being still single accounted for, by her having been long attached to another gentleman, who was, it was said, trying to make up his mind to marry her. This expression the General never could hear without a feeling almost insupportable to him; as if marrying such a woman would be a thing so dreadful, that it was necessary for a man to try to make up his mind to it; and he felt that if this was true, he should find it difficult to help affronting the man, should he ever be in company with him.

In the meanwhile, attentions and invitations to General Monthermer were not confined to the town of X. A nobleman, whose mansion in the country, was at that season of the year the resort of beauty, fashion, and wit, and who had daughters to dispose of, invited the General to join the festive scene. And so many persons had recommended his daughters as charming and superior women, and as likely to make excellent wives, from the education which they had received from an admirable mother, that he resolved he would put himself in the way of liking and of being liked, and see if that one image which had so long stood sentinel over his heart, in Europe and in Asia, could be displaced by the force of youthful beauty. And as soon as his plans were fixed, he went to call on the Trelawneys.

He found Miss Trelawney alone. "General," said she, "I am very glad to have an opportunity of speaking to you when my sister is not present; as I consider you as our best friend." The General bowed, and she proceeded thus: — "You must observe, General, how painful it is to me to see a descendant of such a family as ours keeping a school; while so many persons here, whom formerly we should not have noticed, are living in comparative splendour, and keeping carriages. Indeed, indeed, General, I feel it hard enough to go on foot, though born to keep my coach-and-four, without the additional pain of hearing my sister teach A B C." Here she burst into tears; and the General, who deeply felt for her altered state, expressed his sincere sympathy with her feelings.

"Now, General," she resumed, "what I think is this: — Marian has great talents for drawing and painting; and as it is less degrading for a gentlewoman to be an artist than to keep a school, I wish her to make drawings and paintings for sale; and, with patronage, no doubt she might succeed."

"No doubt; I like the scheme much. But in what style does your sister excel?"

"Oh, General, she can take likenesses in miniature admirably. She does not succeed so well in painting women as men, I think; but

the latter I am sure she would succeed in to admiration."

"What, madam!" cried the General hastily, "would you have your sister set up as a painter of gentlemen's portraits?"

"Not them only," replied Miss Trelawney, "but I will, though I know she would not like it, show you one she did, some years ago, from memory, which I discovered by chance, for I assure you she hides her talent in a napkin; and it is such a likeness! She has another of the same person, which she thinks more like; therefore, knowing how highly I should value it, was willing to give me this."

"Now then, perhaps," thought the General, "I shall see the happy man whom Marian loves!" and his heart beat painfully and tumultuously, when Miss Trelawney unlocked a cabinet, and presented the miniature to him. The General started when he unclosed the case, and could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes, for it was his own picture.

"Did Marian do this," he exclaimed, "and from *memory?*"

"Yes; not long after you went to India, I believe, but it is not many years since I discovered it; I never suspected that she had the talent. Since then she has painted me, but not like. Here it is."

The General took the picture; but he found that though Marian had flattered him, she had not flattered her sister. "She has done me more than justice," said he as he returned Miss Trelawney's picture; "but you much less." And he could not help saying to himself, "In what bright and pleasing colours must I have lived in her remembrance!"

"But see, General! here is another proof of her talents, in which I surprised her the other day, and really forced her to show me." She went into a little back room where Marian kept her books and other things, and out of the drawer of her painting box she took an unfinished miniature. Again the General beheld himself, but as he now was; and he stood gazing at this new proof of accurate remembrance, with a feeling of gratification which deprived him of utterance; when an exclamation of "Come, give me the pictures in a moment, here is Marian coming," roused him from his pleasing trance, and he tried to compose his feelings before she arrived.

She came in smiling with her usual calm sweetness; but her quick eye soon discovered that her sister looked rather fluttered, and the General a good deal. What could have passed between them? Could the report which she had just heard be true, that the General admired her sister? If so, she ought to rejoice. But no; it was mere gossip, and perhaps she was mistaken; and they were really as composed as she was.

At this moment two carriages passed each other before the window, and the General, starting up, asked "whose carriages they were, as the livery was new to him."

"Oh!" cried Miss Trelawney, "no wonder you do not know the livery, for I believe their owners wore a livery when you went away. They are the carriages of some of our *parvenus*, our new rich people, of whom we have plenty."

"Well," said Marian, "it is pleasant to see industry meet its reward; it is much to a man's credit to be the architect of his own fortune; and we ought to rejoice in his success."

"But that is not quite so easy under our circumstances," said Miss Trelawney.

"And indeed, my dear friend," said the General, "it is more painful, believe me, to witness the fall of some, than it is pleasant to behold the rise of others."

"No doubt," said Marian; "but there are some feelings one ought to strive against."

At this moment the same carriages repassed, and Miss Trelawney pettishly exclaimed, "I declare those people's carriages make twice the noise of those of other people."

"The carriages of *parvenus*, I suspect," observed Marian with a melancholy and meaning smile, "always grate more on the nerves than those of others."

"I really think so," replied her sister, unconscious of Marian's meaning; "for coaches and chariots do not seem so well hung *now*, as they were when *our* coach was built."

No one replied, and here the conversation dropped.

Miss Trelawney meanwhile had resolved to be ingenuous; and in order to take advantage of the certainty she had that the General approved the new plan for Marian, she determined to propose it to her in Monthermer's presence.

Accordingly, she told her that she had shown the general her own picture.

"Your own picture! Harriet," cried Marian, turning pale, and then red, "how could you! —You know that"—here she looked earnestly at the countenance of both, and saw clearly that she was informed of only half the truth. "Nay, Harriet," she exclaimed in a faltering voice, "this was not fair—it was very unkind —very."

"What was unfair and unkind! to show our good friend here how well you paint, and, and—"

"No; but you showed him, I suppose, more than your own picture."

"I did."

"I did not think, sister, you would have done such a thing," said Marian, turning to the window to hide her confusion.

"How can you be so unkind," cried the General, affected and gratified by her emotion, "as to be angry with your sister for giving me so much pleasure! Little did I think that I was so well remembered by you, Marian; if I

had, the thought would have gladdened many a mournful hour."

Marian now hastily ran into her own little room; and having examined the drawer of her painting-box, she saw the unfinished likeness had been meddled with; and returning looking even paler than before, she just had power to say, "indeed! indeed! I know not how to forgive this!" and then sunk on her chair in an agony of tears.

Though grieved to see her so distressed, Monthermer was pleased also. To have painted his likeness, and to have shown it, would have only proved her power and vanity as an artist; but to have painted it in secret, to have succeeded, and yet never have vaunted of what she had done; to have wished to conceal it from every eye, and to be agonized at having it exposed to his; this proved unquestionably, he hoped, the secret tenderness of a delicate and feeling woman, afraid, and conscious, that her secret was discovered. And while her sister hung over her, affectionately apologizing and regretting that she had distressed her, Monthermer grasped her hand, and pressed it to his lips.

Marian then suddenly rose and left the room.

"I am so sorry that my sister is thus overpowered," observed Miss Trelawney; "for I wanted to discuss the subject of her becoming a regular artist before you, as you approve the plan."

"I approve the plan! I approve of your sister's having men to sit to her for their pictures? Oh! no, madam; such a scheme is too indelicate for me to approve it, I assure you. But tell me, madam, has your sister never painted any other gentleman from memory?"

"No, sir, I believe never."

"When I went abroad she was talked of for Mr. Montague, and was, I thought, to have—m—married him."

"Yes, so we all thought; but when he offered to her, she refused him."

"Refused him!"

"Yes, and no one knew why."

"But, madam, the world here says, that there is another gentleman who is sure not to be refused if he offers—Mr. Ainslie."

"The world here is a very meddling world. Mr. Ainslie has offered, and was refused at once, much to my distress. But remember, General, I say this to you in confidence. It is very wrong, you know, to tell of such a thing. Yes, Marian certainly has always stood in her own light, (as the saying is,) as well as myself; but then I was ambitious, and had, I believe, some pretensions to look high. But Marian was not ambitious; and I know not to what to attribute her dislike to marry, except she has an attachment; and that I think I must have found out," she added, with an expression of confidence in her own penetration.

Marian now re-entered the room, but evidently avoided meeting the General's eye; and sat in painful consciousness. He now told them he was going to Lord M.'s the next day, and should probably be away two months; and he saw Marian turn pale, while her sister said, "Lord M. has two beautiful and accomplished daughters, I think."

"He has; I have heard them much praised."

"How does your sister-in-law, General, like the idea of this visit? for, as she spares nobody, nobody spares her—and you understand me, General—"

"I do madam," he replied, with an arch smile; "and she does not like the visit at all—but I do; and that is enough for me."

Marian tried to laugh, but could not; and the General, saying he would call the next day before he set off, took his leave.

Before they met again, Marian, used to conquer her feelings, received him with her usual composure. Still her look had somewhat of resignation in it, as if she had made up her mind to bear an expected evil; and long after he had taken his leave, and ceased to see her, that touching look of meek resignation haunted his fancy.

The General's attention to the Trelawneys had excited much notice, and called forth many comments in the town of X——. Still, scarcely any woman, except those who loved Marian, believed that a man whom the young, the beautiful, and the rich might be proud and happy to captivate, would marry a woman of seven-and-thirty, of such few personal charms. And the men could scarcely think a rich Asiatic could be so rational, so self-denying, and so little of a voluptuary, as to prefer a woman like Marian Trelawney, when he could no doubt command the hand of a beautiful girl.

But they little knew General Monthermer. They little knew that his sober mind and well regulated feelings led him to seek, in a wife, a companion, rather than a toy; and that he was too little selfish to promise to himself any happiness in a union with one whose youth would require those gay and pleasant associations with the world, which his maturer years made him cease to relish, and which he would consequently be tempted to withhold from her.

Alas! I fear I am painting a very unnatural character for a general officer, just returned a rich and prosperous bachelor from India! But I must have my own way; and paint such a man as he ought to think and feel, not perhaps as he would.

During the General's absence, the sisters received many calls—not from friendship, but curiosity in the callers; and some fancying Miss Trelawney, if not Miss Marian, had hopes of marrying their old friend, had an *amiable* gratification in assuring them, (finding he had not written to either of them,) that he was certainly going to be married to Lady Laura M——.

"Very likely," was Marian's calm reply; but her sister, who really had flattered herself the General seriously admired her beauty, was scarcely able to restrain her anger, as she protested she did not believe the report was true.

But at length it was so positively asserted, that even Miss Trelawney was convinced; and Mrs. Monthermer, though the General had not acquainted her husband with his prospects, called on the sisters, in order to mortify them, as she hoped, if they had had any expectations, by telling them she had little doubt of the fact, for she had a great antipathy towards Marian, because, though she saw nothing in her, she found she was a general favourite with men, and particularly with her husband. But Marian's mild and open eye shrunk not from hers, and Miss Trelawney's pride kept her calm, while Mrs. Monthermer talked of the dear General's happy prospects; adding, "As he *would* play the fool and marry, which certainly we could not wish at his time of life, and with his yellow skin, indicative, no doubt, of a liver complaint, I am glad he marries a young lady of rank—one whose alliance one can be proud of. I should have been sorry if he had married beneath him in any respect."

"So should I," replied Marian; and Mrs. Monthermer, mortified at their composure, took her leave.

A day or two after, the General returned, and his first visit was to the sisters. It was now the beginning of December; and parliament being unexpectedly called together, he was going that week to London, but he wished to visit his friends before he went.

Though Marian received Mrs. Monthermer without emotion, she was not so self-possessed when she saw the General, and she grieved to think she had lost the power of receiving him with composure; but she soon resumed her look of mild resignation. "Ha! that look again!" thought the General.

Miss Trelawney was, he saw, evidently fluttered, and full of some particular meaning; at last she said, "Well, General, out with it! tell us yourself, though I assure you we know it already."

"Know what?"

"That you are going to be married to Lady Laura M——."

Marian tried to look arch, and to smile; but she did not succeed.

"Lady Laura M—— is very charming," replied the General; "but I am not going to be married to her."

"Well, but you are going to be married to some one?"

"I have not made my proposals yet to any one," replied the General;—"I have not, upon my honour."

"Well, but——"

"But what? Surely, dear madam, even you, my old and very dear friend, have no right to interrogate me further."

"Right? No, General Monthermer, I don't claim any right; only as a friend, anxious for your welfare, I—"

"Well, dear madam, I know and respect your friendly anxiety; and in return I assure you again, on my honour, that when I am an accepted lover, you shall be the first person informed of it, should that happy event ever take place."

"There, Harriet, are you not satisfied now?" said Marian; her own mind, she scarcely knew why, considerably lightened of its burden.

The General, whose observation did not sleep during this scene, now suddenly turned to her and said, "Marian, I know you do not mind wind and weather; and indeed why should you? you are one of the few women who may venture to walk in the wind," he added smiling. "I think a walk on the beach would do us both good. Do you not think, Miss Trelawney, Marian would be better for the walk?"

"Miss Marian will accompany you, I dare say," she replied in her most freezing manner.

"What is the matter?" cried the General, "and how have I offended?"

"Oh! do not be alarmed," said Marian laughing; "but that dear particular creature does not approve your calling me Marian, that is all."

"No? Well, I am very sorry to hear it; but I assure you, dear Miss Trelawney, I shall never presume to call you *Harriet*, and that degree of decorum must, I believe, content you."

"As to decorum, sir," said Miss Trelawney, "I rather suspect both you and my sister are going to violate it, by walking together alone. The X—— people do talk of you and us already."

"Do they? Then they shall talk still more; and after I return with Marian, if you will walk with me also, we shall puzzle them completely, and the power of gossip will, by that means, be neutralized."

Miss Trelawney could not laugh at any thing so serious as a breach of decorum; but Marian smiling took the General's arm, and hastened with him to the beach.

Their walk was long; so long, that when they returned, Miss Trelawney had waited dinner a whole hour; and poor Marian, in blushing distress, earnestly urged her sister to forgive her first fault in that way, "for you know," said she, "I never made dinner wait before."

"And I will almost venture to promise she will never do it again," said the General.

Miss Trelawney was vexed, but she was soon appeased; especially as Marian, overcome with some internal emotion, called for a glass of wine, and seemed rather faint. The General stayed till she was quite recovered, and then took his leave; saying as he did so, "Remember! *only* to her!"

The next day he went to London, and did not return till the Christmas holidays; nor till the delighted Miss Trelawney had heard her sister say, to the great distress of her little pupils and their parents, that she should keep school no more.

The General, before his return, had ordered invitations to be sent out to a ball and supper, which he meant to give during the recess of parliament; and he now arrived to superintend the preparations. The sisters left X—— for a few days just *before he came*, and returned the day *he* did.

The day of the ball now arrived; and as many new dresses were made up for it, as for a court presentation; for now it was well known that General Monthermer was not going to be married, and hope was again alive in the hearts of the young and the elderly.

To this ball the sisters consented to go, and brave all remarks; and their appearance at it, and their dress, did indeed excite considerable notice, and call forth rather severe animadversions; for Miss Trelawney was splendidly attired in a silver muslin, and her sister in the finest and clearest book muslin over white satin; while her fine throat was encircled by a row of orient pearls, and her fine hair fastened up with a diamond comb.

"I begin to think," whispered Mrs. Monthermer, who did the honours, and received the sisters very coldly, "I begin to think the General is not a *marrying man*;—you understand me!" and the whisper was not slow in circulating round the room, though there were few present who gave any credence to so vile an insinuation. Still, so general is the tendency to detraction, that many spread the sneer, who did not believe what it implied, and Marian found herself in a very trying situation; especially as the General, who did not dance, paid her such marked attention as could not but attract the notice of every one.

At length, at one o'clock in the morning, supper was announced; and then to the surprise of every one, and to no one more than to Mrs. Monthermer, Mr. Monthermer took the hand of Marian, and led her down stairs, and to the head of the principal supper table, while the General seated himself at the bottom of it; and when the company had all taken their seats, he filled a glass, and called on all the guests to drink to the health of the bride and bridegroom, General and Mrs. George Monthermer.

Surprise, not unmixed with consternation, now kept every one silent till the toast was repeated; and then it was drunk with a universal cheer from the gentlemen. Mr. Monthermer whispered his indignant wife to keep her own counsel, and no one would know she had not been in the secret, and she wisely took the hint; for by this means she avoided the disgrace of having attacked the fame of Marian or her sister, as she would seem to have been purposely imposing on those who had disseminated her base whisper.

The General had now a pride and a pleasure in declaring, that he had married the only woman whom he had ever loved, and whose image had prevented his ever marrying before; while his happy wife was not slow to own, that it was for his sake, hopeless as was her attachment, that she had refused offers which she should otherwise have been proud to accept. Monthermer had gone to Lord M.'s purposely to expose his constancy to the temptations which awaited him there, and had found it proof against every thing; he had then returned, sure of himself, to prove the heart of Marian, which he fancied he had read aright before he departed; and then, having drawn from Marian an exact detail of what had been said purposely to wound her and her sister's feelings, if they were vulnerable upon that subject, by his sister-in-law and others, he devised the scene of the ball and its painful surprise, as a merited and unexpected mortification to them.

Accordingly, he had fixed to meet the sisters, and had met them with a special license at a very picturesque village, well known to them and him in the days of their youth, the scene of many a rural frolic; and there he received the hand of the woman whom he had loved through every change of scene, of climate, and of fortune.

Six months had now elapsed since the General had parted with Ronald Breadalbane; but though he had written to him, he had never received a letter in return, and he began to fear that he was either ill or unhappy. Still he thought it right to impart to him the happy change in his situation, and to offer to visit him with his bride in the summer recess of parliament. In this letter the General assured him, that no beauty of scenery was necessary to heighten his sense of heartfelt happiness, and that if he would deign to visit the flat plains and shores of X——, he hoped he should be able to convince him, that the affections flourished as luxuriantly on the land of the plain as on the land of the rock and the mountain.

This letter was crossed on the road by one from Breadalbane, sealed with black; it told a tale of sorrows and disappointments. "I found," said he, "the friends of my childhood dead or emigrated, the girl of my heart false, and just married to another; and I fell ill in consequence of this second blow. But my parents still lived, and hung over my fevered couch; therefore I was not yet desolate; but when I recovered, their health, which had been gradually declining, and which anxiety for mine had helped to injure, soon began to decay perceptibly to my view; and they did not long survive each other. O Monthermer, how forcibly have your words ever since

recurred to me! how true do I feel your observations in our last journey together!

"Yes; I now own it is only too true, that unless inhabited by objects whom one loves, the finest scenery becomes insipid and uninteresting; and I believe, therefore, that the most flat and dreary of abodes, if cheered by the looks of affection, may seem an earthly paradise.

"Dear General, Scotland is still indeed the land of the mountain and the valley, and dear to the soul and the eye of the poet and the painter; but to me it is now also the land of disappointment, of solitude and desolation, and I must quit it till I can form new ties, or forget those which exist no more."

The General could not receive this melancholy letter without feeling the tenderest sympathy for the writer; and he lost not a moment in inviting Breadalbane—now Sir Ronald Breadalbane, to change the scene entirely by coming to him; and he trusted that time and new ties would restore to the mourner, feelings more consonant to his years and his nature; and that the lesson of experience would teach him still more, that on the proper and complete exercise of the affections alone, the best happiness of life depends. And as the meanest scrap of gauze, of bead, or of tinsel, looks beautiful and costly through the reflecting mirror of the kaleidoscope, so does the most common and dreary scene acquire attraction and value, when beheld through the beautifying medium of gratified affection.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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